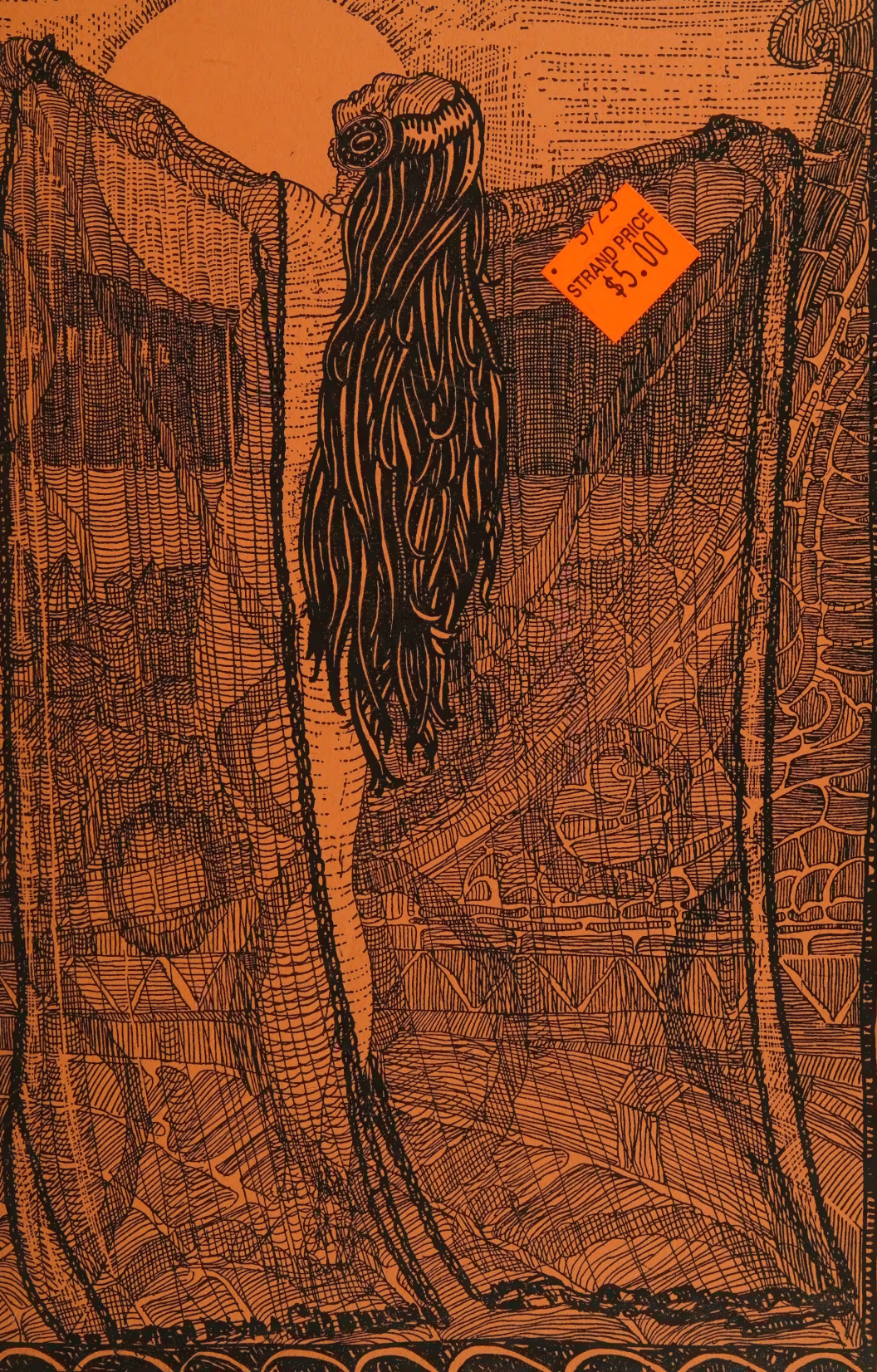








S A L A M M B Ô



"DRINK!"

SALAMMBO

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

BEN RAY REDMAN

ILLUSTRATED & DECORATED BY

MAHLON BLAINE



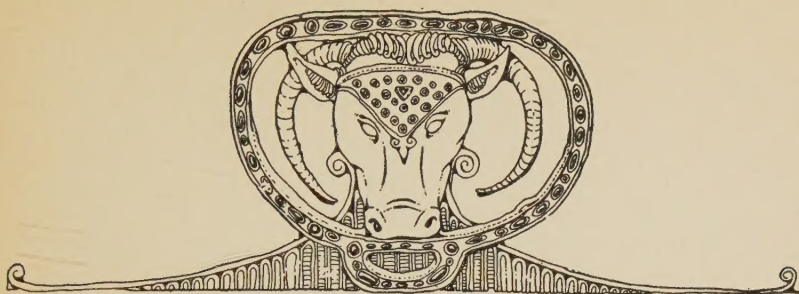
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INTRODUCTION

IN THE month of March, 1857, Gustave Flaubert, aged thirty-five, and author of the still scandalous *Madame Bovary*, began to ransack the libraries and bookstalls of Paris for literature dealing, however remotely, with Carthage. And so doing he launched himself upon a work that was to occupy him constantly until he and his dear friend, Louis Bouilhet, had finished correcting the proofs of *Salammbô*, in October, 1862.

Slightly more than a year before he began his invasion of Carthaginian history, Flaubert had grudgingly made the deletions from *Bovary* that Maxime du Camp had insisted were necessary if the novel were to be housed in the pages of his publication; but the author's sacrifices had proved vain. The final installment of Emma's mutilated story had appeared in *la Revue de Paris* of December 1, 1856; and the ink of the last sentence had scarcely dried when rumors were heard that author, publisher, and printer of the tale were to be haled into court upon the charge of outraging public morals. Flaubert took such steps as he could to prevent the action, but on January 24, 1857, he, Laurent Pichat, and Auguste Pillet, stood before the bar of the Sixth Correctional Chamber. In consonance with judicial tradition, the hearing of the case was postponed a week, and it was not until January 31 that M. Ernest Pinard, Imperial Advocate, earned a strange immortality, in the presence of a distinguished throng, by prosecuting one of

the world's literary masterpieces. "Art that is without rules," he declaimed in his peroration, "is no longer art; it is like a woman who has cast off all her garments. To impose upon art the single rule of public decency is not to enslave it, but to honor it. Rules are essential to growth. And there, gentlemen, are the principles we profess; there is the doctrine that we conscientiously defend."

M. Pinard sat down; the suave M. Sénard rose to reply. When the demolition of the prosecutor's arguments was so complete that all the king's horses and all the king's men could not have re-established them, sage Justice announced that it required a week in which to weigh eloquence against good sense; and the case was adjourned. On February 7, Justice, having deliberated gravely, handed down a decision of not proven, with a thorn of rebuke righteously secreted in its bouquet of acquittal. Gustave Flaubert marched out of the courtroom a free, and profoundly irritated, man.

Emma Bovary might now parade her folly, between green covers, under the imprint of Michel Lévy, who had paid five hundred francs for the privilege of sponsoring her in book form for five years; but her creator's literary plans had been set sadly awry. Having corrected the proofs of his first novel, he had returned to his retreat at Croisset, determined to prepare his much rewritten *Tentation de saint Antoine* for the press; visiting Paris, that he might be present at the first night of Bouilhet's play, *Madame de Montarcy*, he had been caught and held by the charges against *Bovary*, and now he realized that it would be courting disaster to publish the work that had been close to his heart for so many years. Twelve months before he had suspected that his "infernal work" on Saint Anthony might embroil him with the law; now he was sure that its appearance would do nothing towards endearing him to either the "short-robed" or the "long-robed" Jesuits, both of whom, as he wrote Dr. Cloquet, viewed him with displeasure; the former being irritated by his metaphors, the latter being scandalized by his frankness. There was no doubt about it: temporarily, at least, the only place for his Saint was in a box.

But in what direction was his pen to turn? He might write Maurice Schlésinger that the *Bovary* incident had so disgusted him that he hesitated to permit the novel's appearance in book form, that he wished never to publish anything again; but the fact was that the author who, years before, had told Louise Colet that he desired to give none of his writings to the public, had tasted printer's ink; and it is a taste not easily forgotten. Secretly he knew that retirement from the literary field was for him now an impossibility. A month before Lévy issued *Bovary*, he had found his subject.

The *Moniteur universel* had approached him with flattering offers, but it was the advances of *la Presse*, whose fiction editor was then Charles Edmond, that he accepted; agreeing to write an "ancient historical novel," based upon the "inexpiable war" of the Mercenaries against Carthage as it is described by Polybius. Then it was that Parisian librarians and booksellers began to be haunted by a robust, moustached young man from Rouen, who manifested an insatiable hunger for every last fact relating to Carthage, her history, her people, her customs, and her religions.

By the beginning of May, Flaubert's research had yielded him a weighty harvest; and on Saturday, the 2nd of that month, he set out for Croisset, his boxes stuffed with books, his head full of memoranda. He needed photographic views of Tunis, he required information regarding Carthaginian flora and fauna, he desired precise data on Punic costumes, Punic rites, Punic military manoeuvres; he had already accumulated so much material, and he wanted so much more, that he must have been puzzled where to begin. But he was sure, at least, of his fundamental structure—the last few chapters of the first book of Polybius's *History* had furnished him that—and once settled in his study at Croisset, where he knew so well how to live the life of a "literary monk," he plunged furiously into his appointed business. Croisset was to hold him until the year's end.

Folios rose in unsteady piles upon his great, round table, quartos and octavos dripped down over the white bearskin rug, masses of notes climbed into monuments of synthetic erudition.

Amid the confusion from which his Carthage was to grow, Flaubert, broad-shouldered, red-faced, shining-eyed, labored like a giant, rising at noon, falling exhausted into bed at four in the morning. A few friends came and went—Ernest Feydeau, Gautier, Saint-Victor, Bouilhet—and with the last he must have recalled the days when one of them was writing *Bovary*, while, in a near-by room of the same house, the other worked at *Melænis*, which was to make Sainte-Beuve remark that its author had been “gathering up Musset’s cigar butts.” But no friends could lure him long from his Punic phalanxes and his Barbarian warriors. By the end of May he wrote Jules Duplan that he had already consumed and made notes from fifty-three volumes; by the middle of July the total had mounted to ninety-eight.

It is impossible here to trace in chronological order the steps of Flaubert’s research; until the last page of his book went to the printer, he was still striving to dispel the mists that hung over the city of Salammbô, daughter of Hamilcar. But the broad outlines of his endeavor may be sketched. His problem was to reconstruct the Carthage and the Punic world of 241-238 B. C. Polybius was the keystone of his edifice; Herodotus, Plutarch, Xenophon, and Nepos were quarried for useful hints and general facts. From Appian he drained information regarding the geography and topography of the country in and around Carthage; and in the same source, as well as in Diodorus Siculus, he delved for details of Carthaginian fortification. The constitution to which Hamilcar and Hanno subscribed was studied in Polybius, Aristotle, Livy, and Procopius. Pliny, flanked by seven other authorities, yielded up his store of magic; Pausanias provided hearsay comment on the Sacred Horses of the Sun; while the description of Tanit’s veil was adapted from a colorful passage in Athenæus. To Diodorus, Flaubert returned for a sight of the image of Moloch; and accounts of the infant sacrifice delectable to that deity were culled from the pages of Saint Augustine, Tertullian, Eusebius, Cicero, and Strabo. Corippus supplied notes on the peoples of Africa; Theophrastus brought to Croisset the ancient lore of

precious stones; and Ælian initiated Flaubert into classic military tricks and strategy.

But many stones essential to the reconstruction were still wanting. Where in the world were there accurate data on Punic architecture, customs, costumes, jewelry, musical instruments; information regarding a hundred and one aspects of everyday Carthaginian life? Unconnected fragments might be piled up interminably; what the artist required was a vision of the whole. Desperately casting about him, Flaubert at last concluded that the Hebrews of Biblical days were probably closer to the Carthaginians of the third century B. C. than any other people of whom we have a fairly full knowledge. So he attacked Cahen's eighteen-volume translation of the Bible; and in its lavish notes he found much that he wanted. But it was characteristic of the man that, even as he read for facts, he could not suppress the stylist in himself. However much Cahen might assist him, he could not resist writing Feydeau that he still preferred the *Vulgate*, because of the Latin: "How it roars! in comparison with our sickly, consumptive little French."

In the quiet Croisset study the work went on, and modern authorities began to jostle the ancient authors. Falbe's *Recherches sur l'emplacement de Carthage* found a place there. Dureau de la Malle's *Carthage*, and d'Avezac's *L'Afrique ancienne*, each less than fifteen years old, rubbed covers with Herodotus and Plutarch. Beulé's *Fouilles à Carthage* arrived in 1858. Monographs published by the Academy of Inscriptions littered the floor; a marked copy of the *Gazette medicale* found a niche; while less formal documents accumulated in every available resting place. For Flaubert sought information from his friends, acquaintances, and learned bodies, as relentlessly as he combed his battered folios. Letters, laden with urgent requests, flowed steadily from his door; responses filtered back.

Two communications from the Rouen Museum of Natural History brought him a catalogue of flora capable of desert life, and a list of flowers that might have been found in the gardens of Hamilcar. The Museum of Natural History in Paris, prov-

ing less helpful, politely informed him that documents regarding the diseases of serpents and their cures were not available; but a private correspondent obliged with a description of snake charmers and their methods; another explained the Phœnician system of computation; a third furnished a list of villages and ruins to be found along the route from Tunis to Kef (Sicca); while a fourth saved the author from confounding the Thebes of Greece with the Thebes of Egypt. M. Baudry called his attention to a passage on the temple of Astarte, to be found in Renan; while another advisor warned him to mistrust Abbé Marsden's dicta on Latin and Iberian inscriptions. And we may imagine that Flaubert marked with a white stone the day on which there arrived a letter from the French Legation at Tunis, apprising him that, between Carthage and Utica, there was "a ravine, or rather a deep gorge, called Tenyet-el-Fez, *the road of the Battle-Axe*," which might be the defile he was seeking. It was, indeed; his fourteenth chapter was safe.

Swiftly as he worked, the mass of material rose steadily before him; but Flaubert attacked it as ferociously as his hero, Mâtho, assailed the walls of Carthage. No trifle was too small to call forth herculean efforts: he had been at home only a few days when he wrote Duplan that he was "in the process of reading a four hundred page quarto on the pyramidal cypress, because there were cypresses in the court of the temple of Astarte." By mid-May he informed the same friend that he had at least two months more of preparation ahead of him before he could set pen to paper; and July 2nd brought the announcement that he would begin writing in August. At the end of July a volume of the *Catholic Encyclopædia* went back to Eugene Crépet with word that the borrower had found nothing of value in it, but that he would give almost anything for a reproduction of a *genuine* Punic mosaic. And at the same time Flaubert wrote despairingly to Feydeau that he did not yet feel ready to proceed with composition: "I would give the half-ream of notes that I have written during the past five months, and the ninety-eight volumes that I have read, to be really moved, for three seconds, by the emotions of my characters."

The formidable structure loomed before him, but as yet there was no animation within it.

The first of August came and went; still he persisted in his preparations, and again he poured out his doubts to Feydeau. "For six weeks I have recoiled like a coward before *Carthage*. I keep piling notes upon notes, for I do not feel that I have caught the swing of the thing. I do not yet see my objective clearly. For a book to *sweat* truth, an author must be stuffed to his very ears with the subject. Then the color comes quite naturally, as an inevitable result and as a flowering of the idea itself . . . I still have various researches to make . . . Then I shall ruminate the plan I have made, and settle down to it! And the terrors of phrase will commence, the agonies of assonance, the torture of periods!"

Flaubert did not exaggerate; *Salammbô* was to torture him—as did all his mature writings—throughout the period of its composition. But still the author was not quite ready with his self-prepared rack and thumb-screws. A week after writing Feydeau, he triumphantly scribbled Bouilhet that he had at last finished his "infernal notes," save for three volumes that must be read; and a fortnight later, really completing his task, he "came up for air." But his cowardice persisted; the necessity of approximating his ideal terrified him. "The execution is everything," he wrote. "The history of a louse may be more beautiful than that of Alexander." Flaubert was just a month behind his appointed schedule when he sharpened and polished his quills on the first day of September. The rack was ready.

The quills, withdrawn from their copper basin, began to scratch in the Croisset study; one after another dulled and was flung aside. Through the windows, hung with brightly flowered chintz, the late sunlight came to glitter on strange objects scattered at random around the low-ceilinged room: primitive musical instruments, strings of glass beads, Egyptian amulets that shone dully under their greenish patina, savage arrows, copper dishes. A broad band of light fell across the round table, covered with a green cloth on which the literary gambler played

for immortality, and illumined all the faults of the wretched water-color portrait hung beside the fireplace. On the mantel-piece a clock of yellow marble ticked off the hurrying minutes; and on that clock a bronze bust of Hippocrates looked down a little disdainfully upon the man who had foresworn medicine for letters. Hastily, as if in justification, a quill sought the toad-shaped inkstand. More sympathetically, Pradier's bust of Flaubert's dead sister watched from between the two windows that overlooked the Seine; and in one corner two mummy's feet languished as visible evidence of a past their owner was struggling to resuscitate. The light on the white wainscoting faded; the great elm in the garden grew black, and the outline of the hill behind it disappeared. The multitudinous books on their oaken shelves were in shadow now; and still the quills scratched on. Under the gaze of Hippocrates, midnight sounded. One o'clock struck; two; three. And Flaubert, drained dry, flung himself down upon the divan piled high with Turkish cushions.

Day after day the performance was repeated. The rippling waters of the Seine that spread out, broad as a lake, before the long, low, white house with its Empire façade, did not tempt the literary eremite; the three windows opening upon the garden could not seduce his gaze. In the third week of his labor he found himself half through the first chapter of the story he still called *Carthage*. Precisely when he fastened upon the title of *Salammbô* we do not know. In his first scenario he referred to his heroine as Pyrrha; the alternative name did not appear in his letters until the end of November, and it was first used as a title in May of the following year.

The opening chapter was completed, unsatisfactorily, by the beginning of November. Flaubert, disconsolate, set to work upon the second, only to find himself fatally balked before he had written a third of it. The first stage of his long journey was behind him, but he knew now that every step of it would have to be retraced. His book was not alive; he must breathe the air of Africa and stand upon the site of Carthage before he could proceed. Bouilhet came to Croisset with consolation and advice,

and, just as the year was dying, Flaubert left for Paris in time to put in an appearance at Mme. Sabatier's usual Sunday gathering on January 3rd.

Illness, his own and his mother's, held him inactive for the first two months of the new year; but during March he was busy with his preparations for travel, and on Monday, April 12, he left Paris by the evening express for Marseilles. Boarding the *Hermas* on the 15th, he reached Tunis nine days later, and, using that city as his base, began his explorations of the surrounding country. It was a hurried journey, and the colorful life of modern Africa claimed more of his time than its ancient ruins; but he found what he wanted, he studied the site of Carthage, visited Utica, Hippo-Zarytus (Bizerte), Sicca (Kef), and he was in his favorite element. "I go to bed late and get up early," he wrote. "I sleep like a rock, eat like an ogre, and drink like a sponge." On Saturday, June 5, he was back in Paris, and four days afterwards he was at Croisset, preparing to strike out all that he had written. The African sunlight still shone in his eyes, the soil that had buried the city of Hamilcar still clung to his boots; he had followed in the steps of Mâtho and Spendius; he had watched the same stars that had held the gaze of Salammbô. "It is absolutely essential that I make a trip to Africa," he had written Mlle. Leroyer de Chantepie. He had made it, and now, drunk with his subject, he could begin again.

Having familiarized ourselves with Flaubert's method of work, we need not hound him through all the trials and ardors of composition. The predicted tortures came to pass; he wrote slowly, with infinite revisions, living in dread of repeating himself. Illuminating as specimens of his method are the three drafts that he made of his famous description of sunrise over Carthage. Studying the evolution of this passage, we realize how painstakingly the author arrived at his "effects"; but every final paragraph represented a similar process. As early as 1846 he had written: "Anything resembling inspiration must be held suspect . . . Pegasus walks more frequently than he gallops;

the whole of talent lies in knowing how to make him take the proper paces."

Flaubert's history from the time of his return from Carthage until the last months of 1862 consists of long sieges of toil at Croisset, punctuated by briefer sojourns in Paris, where he combined social activities with more work in his apartment, 42 boulevard du Temple. It is reported that towards the end his servant was permitted to speak to him only once a week, and then merely to say: "Sir, it is Sunday."

It was on a May Sunday in 1861 that he first submitted *Salammbô*, or as much of it as was then written, to a public hearing. In this instance the public was selectly represented by the painter, Gleyre, and the Goncourts; and the indefatigable, frequently malicious diarists have described the occasion. The gathering was in Flaubert's apartment. "From four o'clock until seven, Flaubert read in his sonorous, roaring voice that lulls you like the rhythmic clash of bronze. At seven we dined, and immediately after dinner and a single pipe the reading began again; and from there we went on to re-read individual bits, some as yet not completed, which he analysed. When we finally reached the last chapter, it was two o'clock." After which, the Goncourts, writing for posterity, set down precisely what they thought of their friend's Carthaginian novel, and so doing, despite several shrewd observations, they damned their own critical faculty more effectively than they damned *Salammbô*. The style was lacking in modernity, they protested. Of course it was, being perfectly wedded to the subject.

The first shot against Flaubert's book had been fired, secretly. The open cannonade was to begin at the end of November, 1862, when *Salammbô* made its long promised appearance in front of Michel Lévy's establishment on the rue Vivienne. And what a barrage there was! Or rather two, for the author was caught between them as if between the Punic and Barbarian camps. On the one side, Sainte-Beuve demanded a lexicon for the book's elucidation and denounced its multitudinous details as *chinoiseries*; on the other, the people protested the story was dull, and laughed when it was travestied upon the stage.

Accusations of immorality cropped up, of course. But Flaubert defended his archæology against Sainte-Beuve and the dogmatic Froehner; and the public bought the book. Nor did *Salammbô* lack champions. Hugo found it a "powerful and learned" book, and assured its author that he had resuscitated a vanished world. Hérédia saluted him: "Oh, Schalischim of poets, Suffete of prose writers! May the Baalim preserve thee!" Leconte de Lisle shouted "Bravo!", and Michelet gave his solemn blessing. The battle raged, it subsided indecisively; and still faint echoes of it may be heard. Even to-day there are critics who ask: "Is *Salammbô* worthy of the immense effort and talent that produced it?"

Here, adjacent to the text of the novel itself, is not the place for dogmatism; every reader will be his own judge. But a few preparatory comments may not be vain. First, it should be noted that when Flaubert turned his back upon the French bourgeois characters whom he loathed to adventure among Carthaginians and Barbarians of the third century B. C., he was not wandering into unfamiliar territory, but returning to the shrine of his favorite Muse. The past had fascinated him always, as the mysterious East had fascinated him. His vision had been historical from the first; his *Juvenalia* bristle with historical sketches and narratives; history, studied under Chéruel, a pupil of Michelet, had been his beloved subject during his Rouen school-days. If ever a book were written *con amore*, it is *Salammbô*. But love is not enough, infinite patience is not enough, to produce a work of art; and it is the finished product, not the intention that we must judge. In this case, what do we find?

We find a romantic edifice reared upon a framework of classic simplicity. From the spare pages of Polybius comes the story of the Mercenaries' revolt against Carthage, after the peace which ended the First Punic War. Baldly, the Greek historian recounts the facts: the retirement of the Barbarians to Sicca; the ambassadorship of the Carthaginian general, Hanno; Gisco's attempt at pacification, and his seizure by the Mercenaries; the final decision of the rebel leaders, Mâtho and Spen-

dus, and all the subsequent military events that were to find a place in Flaubert's narrative. From Polybius, too, come all the chief actors in the drama, with the capital exception of Salammbô; for the historian merely mentions a daughter of Hamilcar, without naming her. But it was the artist who created the character of the Carthaginian maiden, and who vitalized his entire novel by imagining the mad love that hurled Mâtho against the walls of Carthage.

Bare history is transformed into a tale of romantic passion, but the classic outline is not sacrificed; and the strength of the novel derives from the fact that its romance was implicit in its subject. The infatuation of Mâtho the Libyan for Salammbô finds expression, not in eloquence à la Chateaubriand but in acts; the wily Spendius, son of a Greek rhetor and a Campanian prostitute, is as Greek as Odysseus; the callous practicality of commercial Carthage is embodied in Hamilcar, its degeneracy in Hanno. In brief, the author indulged in no romantic falsification of character; and, as the wiser critics have pointed out, *Salammbô* is as "naturalistic" in its way as *Madame Bovary*, for, once his preliminary reconstruction work was done, Flaubert sought to view his ancients as contemporaries. So far as was humanly possible, he succeeded. And if the horrors of his subject seem to have obsessed him, one can only say that he chose a subject in which the element of horror was ubiquitous, which was his right.

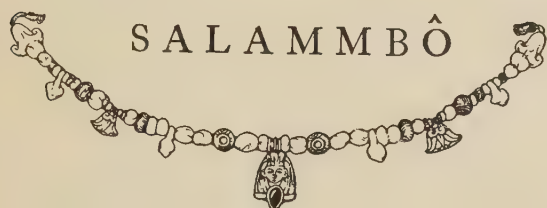
One word of warning should perhaps be whispered to those who approach this novel for the first time. For the reader, as it did for the author, the story comes to life gradually. The feast of the Mercenaries in the first chapter, despite Flaubert's efforts to animate it, appears as a carefully posed tableau seen in a dim light. But with the Barbarians' march to Sicca, the shadows begin to lift, and by the time we have reached the siege of Carthage, the whole action is taking place beneath a revealing sun. The force and velocity of the story steadily increase, until we reach the tragic, almost unbearable climax. Then the figure of Mâtho, that has already assumed heroic proportions in battle, is made infinitely human in martyrdom;

then the tardy blossom that is Salammbô opens wide its petals in poignant fulfilment. Indeed, there are few passages in literature so moving as the description of Mâtho's tortured march through the dense throng of his enemies from the Acropolis of Carthage to the square of Khamoûn. Every step of the doomed man's progress, watched fixedly by the woman he has loved, from the height of her tortoise-shell throne, is directed by a master of evocative prose. Were the whole long book merely preliminary to this one magnificent scene, Flaubert's struggles would not have been in vain; this alone would justify a man's "shutting himself up in a room, to transform his whole life into literature, and his whole experience into style."

Reading the last line of this unique romance—"Ainsi mourut la fille d'Hamilcar pour avoir touché au manteau de Tanit"—we echo the salutation of José Maria de Hérédia, and repeat: "*Que les Baalim te gardent!*"

BEN RAY REDMAN

Ogunquit, Maine
July 27, 1927.



SALAMMBÔ

I: THE

FEAST



IT WAS at Megara, on the outskirts of Carthage, in the gardens of Hamilcar.

The soldiers whom he had commanded in Sicily were celebrating with a great feast the anniversary of the battle of Eryx; and as the master was absent, while they were present in force, they were eating and drinking their fill.

The captains, wearing bronze cothurns, were seated in the central avenue, beneath a purple canopy fringed with gold, extending from the stable walls on one side to the first terrace of the palace on the other; while the majority of the common soldiers were dispersed under the trees where there were numerous flat-roofed structures, comprising wine-presses, wine-cellars, bakeries, warehouses, and arsenals. There were also a court for elephants, pits for savage beasts, and a prison for slaves.

The kitchens were surrounded by fig-trees; beyond, a sycamore grove extended to masses of verdure wherein pomegranates shone amid white-tufted cotton plants; grape-laden vines climbed among the branches of the pines; a field of roses bloomed beneath the plane trees, and here and there lilies waved gracefully above the lawn. The pathways were strewn

with black sand mixed with coral dust, and through the centre of this vast park, from end to end, an avenue of cypress trees formed a double colonnade of green obelisks.

The palace, built of yellow-spotted Numidian marble, in four terraced stories, rose above a foundation of huge stone courses. With its grand straight, ebony stairway, bearing on the corner of each step the prow of a vanquished galley; its red doors quartered with black crosses, protected from scorpions by brass grillages at the base and the openings at the top masked by the trellises of golden baguettes—it seemed to the soldiers, in its display of barbaric opulence, as solemn and impenetrable as the face of Hamilcar.

The Council had turned over the house to the soldiers for their festival; and at daybreak the convalescents who had slept in the temple of Eschmoûn set out to attend the feast, dragging themselves on their crutches to the gardens. Every moment newcomers arrived. Down all the paths soldiers poured incessantly, like torrents rushing into a lake. Through the trees could be seen bewildered, half-naked kitchen slaves rushing about; and the gazelles fled bleating over the lawns. The sun was setting, and the perfume of the lemon-trees intensified the exhalations of the perspiring crowd.

Men of all nations were gathered together here: Ligurians, Lusitanians, Balearic warriors, Negroes, and Roman fugitives. Here could be heard, mingled with the heavy Dorian *patois*, Celtic syllables, rattling like battle-chariots; and Ionian terminations clashed with desert consonants, harsh as the yelping of jackals. Greeks could be recognised by their slender figures; Egyptians by their high, square shoulders; Cantabrians by their broad, muscular legs; Carians proudly swayed their helmet plumes; Cappadocian archers were conspicuous by the large flowers painted over their entire bodies; and some Lydians feasted arrayed in women's robes, slippers, and earrings; others had daubed themselves with vermillion, moving about like animated coral statues.

They reclined on cushions, and ate squatting around great

trays; or lay flat on their stomachs, pulling pieces of meat towards themselves, and munching them while they leaned on their elbows, in the peaceful pose of lions devouring their prey. The late comers, standing against the trees, looked at the low tables, half concealed beneath scarlet cloths, and awaited their turn.

Hamilcar's kitchens being insufficient for this occasion, the Council had supplied slaves, utensils, and couches. Bright, huge fires blazed in the centre of the gardens, before which oxen were roasting, giving the appearance of a battle-field upon which the dead were being burned. Loaves of bread sprinkled with anise-seed alternated with huge cheeses heavier than discs; while bowls of wine and canthari filled with water stood beside flower-laden baskets of gold filigree. All eyes grew wide with joy at being able to feast freely at last; and here and there a song was raised.

First came birds, covered with green sauce, served in red clay dishes embellished with black designs; then all species of shell-fish caught on the Punic coast, followed by broths of barley, wheat, and beans; and snails dressed with cumin, on plates of yellow amber. Later the tables were covered with every variety of meats: roasted antelopes, with their horns—peacocks in their plumage—whole sheep cooked in sweet wine—legs of camels and buffaloes—hedgehogs, with garum sauce—fried grasshoppers, and candied dormice. In bowls of Tamrapanni wood large pieces of fat floated in the midst of saffron—every dish overflowed with pickles, truffles, and assafoetida; pyramids of fruit rolled over honey-cakes; nor had there been forgotten some of those red-haired, plump little dogs fattened on olive-lees: a Carthaginian dainty held in abomination by all other peoples.

Appetites were whetted by novel dishes. Gauls, with their long hair coiled up on the top of their heads, snatched at watermelons and lemons, which they crunched, rinds and all; Negroes, who had never seen lobsters before, cut their faces with the red claws; shaven-faced Greeks, whiter than marble,

threw the leavings from their plates behind them, while herdsmen of Bruttium, clothed in wolves' skins, ate silently with their faces buried in the food.

Night fell. The canopy that had been spread over the cypress avenue was now withdrawn, and torches were lit.

In the tops of the cedars, the apes who were sacred to the moon were frightened by the wavering petroleum lights, burning in porphyry vases; and their chattering filled the soldiers with mirth.

Slim flames trembled over the brazen cuirasses, and the gem-encrusted dishes flashed with a thousand lights. Bowls bordered with convex mirrors multiplied the reflected images, enlarging every object so strangely as to attract the attention of the soldiers, who, in astonishment, crowded around, gazing at themselves, or making grimaces to provoke the laughter of their comrades. Across the tables they tossed the ivory stools and the gold spatulas. With deep draughts they drained the Greek wine from the wine-skins, the Campanian wines from the amphoræ, the Cantabrian from the casks, and the wines of jujube, cinnamon and lotus. Some of it fell, forming slippery puddles on the ground. The fumes of meat, mingling with human breath, rose through the leaves. There was a din of crunching jaws, words, songs, clinking cups, crashing Campanian vases—scattered in a thousand fragments—and the clear ring of silver plates.

As the drunkenness increased, the injustice that Carthage had done them became uppermost in the soldiers' minds.

The Republic, exhausted by the war, had permitted all the returning troops to gather in the city. However, their general, Gisco, had taken the precaution of sending them back in detachments, in order to facilitate their payment; but the Council, believing that they would succeed in getting these warriors to consent to a reduction, had detained them. At present dissatisfaction was caused by the inability to pay. This war debt was confused in the minds of the people with the three thousand two hundred Eubœan talents exacted by Lutatius; hence these soldiers, like the Romans, were considered enemies to Carthage.

The Mercenaries understood this and as a result their indignation burst forth in threats and bad feeling. Finally they demanded a reunion to celebrate one of their victories, and the peace party yielded, hoping at the same time to revenge itself upon Hamilcar, who had so strongly supported the war. It had been terminated contrary to his policy and efforts; so much so that, despairing of help from Carthage, he placed Gisco in command of the Mercenaries. To turn over Hamilcar's palace to the Mercenaries was to direct towards him some of the hate that they felt for the Council. Besides, the expense would be excessive; and he would have to bear most of it.

Proud of having made the Republic yield, the Mercenaries believed that they would also ultimately return to their homes with the price of their blood in the hoods of their cloaks. But now their hardships, seen through a mist of drunkenness, seemed prodigious, and but poorly recompensed. They displayed their wounds, recounted their battles, their journeys, and the hunts peculiar to their various countries; imitating the cries and leaps of savage beasts. They made shameless wagers, plunged their heads into the wine jars, and then drank steadily like thirsty dromedaries. A Lusitanian, of gigantic height, carrying a man upon each arm, ran across the tables, spitting fire from his nostrils. Lacedemonians, still laden with their cuirasses, leaped about with heavy strides; some imitated women making obscene gestures; some, stripped naked, wrestled like gladiators in the midst of the feast; and a company of Greeks danced around a vase decorated with nymphs; meantime a Negro pounded on a brass buckler with a beef-bone.

Suddenly a plaintive song, strong and soft, was heard, rising and falling on the air like the fluttering wings of a wounded bird. It was the voice of the slaves imprisoned in the *ergastulum*. Some soldiers bounded off and disappeared, bent upon liberating them.

Presently they returned, shouting, and chasing before them, through the dust, a score of men, distinguished by the paler hue of their faces. Their shaven heads were covered by little, conical-shaped, black felt caps; their feet were shod in wooden

sandals, and as they ran, their chains clattered like the iron felloes of a moving chariot. Thus driven, they finally reached the cypress avenue, where they were lost in the crowd that surrounded and questioned them.

One of them stood apart from the others. Through his tattered tunic it could be seen that his shoulders were marked by long weals. With chin lowered he looked suspiciously about him as he half-closed his eyelids, in the glare of the torches; but when he saw that none of the armed men wanted to harm him, a deep sigh of relief escaped from his breast, and he stammered and mumbled, while tears bathed his face; then, suddenly seizing a full cantharus by its rings, he raised it high, straight in the air, revealing chains dangling from his wrists.

He gazed upward, still holding the cup, as he cried: "All hail! first, to thee, Baal Eschmoûn, liberator, whom the people of my country call Æsculapius! Hail! ye genii of the springs! of the light! and of the woods! and ye, gods, hidden beneath the mountains and in the caverns of the earth! and ye, strong men in shining armour, who have released me!"

He dropped the cup, and told his story. His name was Spendius; he had been captured by the Carthaginians during the battle of the Ægatian islands. He spoke Greek, Ligurian, and Phœnician. Once more he thanked the Mercenaries, kissed their hands, felicitated them on their feast; but expressed surprise that he did not see the golden cups of the Sacred Legion. These cups were embellished on each of their six golden faces by an emerald vine, and belonged to a militia exclusively comprised of young patricians of the tallest stature. To see them was a privilege, considered almost a sacerdotal honour, and nothing in the treasury of the Republic was so coveted by the Mercenaries. They detested the Legion because of this possession, and had been known to risk their lives for the ineffable pleasure of merely drinking out of these cups. Incited by the words of the slave, the soldiers demanded that the cups should be brought to them. The slaves said that they were deposited with the Syssites, companies of merchants who ate in common; but at this hour all the members of the Syssites slept.

"Let them be wakened!" responded the Mercenaries.

After another attempt, one of the slaves explained that the cups were locked up in a temple.

"Let the temple be opened!" replied the soldiers. And when the slaves trembled, avowing that the cups were in the custody of General Gisco, the men yelled, "Let him bring them!"

Presently Gisco appeared at the end of the garden, with an escort of the Sacred Legion: his ample black mantle was adjusted on his head by a gold mitre starred with precious stones; and its folds fell all around him, reaching down to his horse's hoofs and blending in the distance with the shadows of night. His white beard, the radiance of his coiffure, and his triple collar of wide blue plaques, which, agitated by the motion of his horse, struck against his breast, alone were visible.

As he appeared, the soldiers saluted him with great cheers, crying out: "The cups! The cups!"

He began by declaring that "if one only considered their courage, they certainly merited the cups,"—at which the crowd fairly howled with joy. "He knew it well, he who had commanded them, and had returned with the last cohort, on the last galley!"

"It is true! it is true!" they cried out.

"Nevertheless," continued Gisco, "the Republic respects the divisions of the people, their customs, and their religions; at Carthage they were free. But the gold cups of the Sacred Legion, they were personal property."

Suddenly, from beside Spendius, a Gaul darted across the tables, making straight for Gisco, whom he threatened with two naked swords. Without interrupting himself, the General struck this man over the head with his heavy ivory staff, felling him to the ground; at this the Gauls all shrieked, and their fury communicating itself to the other soldiers, they turned upon the Legionaries.

Gisco shrugged his shoulders as he saw his escort grow pale: his courage would be vain against these foolish, exasperated brutes. It would be better to avenge himself later by some strategy; so he made a sign to his guards, and they all slowly

moved away. Then, as he passed through the gateway, he turned toward the Mercenaries, and cried out: "You shall repent of this!"

The feast was resumed; but the revellers were uneasy; Gisco might return, and by surrounding the suburb which lay beside the outer ramparts, crush them against the walls. They felt alone, despite their numbers; and the vast city, with its massive piles of stairways and lofty black mansions sleeping under them in the shadow, filled them with terror; but yet more ferocious than the city, or its people, were its mysterious gods. In the distance ships' lanterns glided about the harbour, and lights could be seen in the temple of Khamoûn. Their troubled thoughts reverted to Hamilcar. Where was he? Why had he abandoned them just as peace was declared? Doubtless his dissensions with the Council had been a trick planned for their destruction. They goaded one another on by the recital of their personal wrongs, and their insatiable hatred centred itself upon him.

At this stage a crowd was attracted under the plane trees by a Negro who rolled about beating the ground frantically with his arms and feet, his eyes fixed, his neck contorted, and foaming at the mouth. Someone cried out that the man had been poisoned; then they all believed themselves to be poisoned, and fell upon the slaves. A vertigo of destruction whirled over this drunken army; they struck at random, breaking, maiming, killing. Some, moved by diabolical impulse, hurled torches into the foliage; others leaned over the balustrade of the lions' pit, ruthlessly killing the animals with arrows; and the most venturesome recklessly ran to the elephants, and sought to hew off their trunks and destroy their tusks.

Meanwhile a group of Balearic slingers, with an eye to more convenient pillage, had turned a corner of the palace, but were hindered from proceeding by a high barrier of Indian cane. With their daggers they severed the leather thongs that held the hedge together, and found themselves under the façade that looked toward Carthage, in another garden filled with tall vegetation. Rows of white flowers succeeded one an-

other, throwing shadows on the azure-coloured ground like trails of shooting stars. Shadowy bushes exhaled honey-sweet, warm odours; and the trunks of trees, daubed with cinnabar, resembled blood-stained columns. In the centre were twelve copper pedestals, each one supporting a large glass bowl; the ruddy gleams filled and flickered confusedly in these hollow bowls, like enormous throbbing eye-balls. The soldiers carried torches as they stumbled down a deeply furrowed declivity. They descried a little lake, divided into numerous basins by partitions of blue stone. The water contained therein was so limpid that the reflected torch flames quivered to the very bottom, striking on a bed of white shells and gold dust. Suddenly the water set up a bubbling, and luminous spangles glistened, as large fish, with precious stones in their gills, came swimming to the surface.

The soldiers, laughing boisterously, seized the fish by their gills, and carried them to the tables. These fish belonged to the Barca family, and were reputed descendants of the primordial eel-pout, which had hatched the mystic egg wherein was hidden the goddess.

The idea of committing a sacrilege revived the gluttony of the Mercenaries. They kindled fires under the brass vases, and entertained themselves by watching the beautiful fish flounder about and perish in the boiling water. The throng of soldiers surged forward. Fear no longer deterred them. They again commenced their carousal and drinking. Perfumes trickled down over their foreheads, falling in large drops, moistening their tattered tunics. They leaned their fists on the tables, that seemed to them to be rolling like ships; while their large, drunken eyes roved about as though seeking to devour with their glances all that they were unable to take away. Others walked about in the midst of the plates on the crimson table-covers, breaking with wanton kicks the Tyrian glass phials and the ivory benches. Songs intermingled with the death-rattle of the attendant slaves, breathing their last amid the shattered cups. Still the soldiers demanded more wine, more meat, more gold. They shouted for women—raving in a hun-

dred languages. Some believed themselves in the vapour baths, deceived by the fumes floating about them; or even, whilst observing the foliage, fancied that they were engaged in hunting, and thus deluded, would rush violently upon their comrades, thinking them to be ferocious beasts. The torches were igniting the foliage, and the fire spread from tree to tree, until the tall masses of verdure resembled a volcano beginning to smoke. The clamour redoubled, the wounded lions roared, and the elephants trumpeted through the darkness.

Of a sudden the palace was illuminated to its highest terrace; the central door opened, and a woman—the daughter of Hamilcar herself—robed in black garments, appeared on the threshold. She descended the stairway that obliquely traversed the third story, then the second and the first, pausing on the last terrace at the top of the galley staircase. Motionless, with lowered head, she looked down upon the soldiers. Behind her on either side were two long processions of pale men, clothed in white red-fringed robes, hanging straight to their feet. Their heads and eyebrows were shaven; their hands, in which they carried enormous lyres, glittered with rings. In a shrill voice they sang a hymn to the Divinity of Carthage. These were the eunuch priests of the temple of Tanit, often summoned by Salammbô to her palace.

At last she descended the stairway of the galleys, followed by the priests, and moved forward under the cypress trees, between the tables at which the captains were seated, who drew back slightly as they watched her pass. Her hair was powdered with violet dust, and, according to the fashion of Canaanite maidens, it was gathered up in the form of a tower on the crown of her head, making her appear still taller: strands of pearls fastened to her temples fell to the corners of her mouth—as rosy as a half-opened pomegranate; on her bosom she wore a collection of luminous gems, which appeared in their medley as the scales of a sea-eel; her sleeveless tunic, made of a black tissue, was starred with red flowers, and exposed her bare arms, bedecked with diamonds. Between her ankles she wore a gold chainlet to regulate the length of her steps; and

her voluminous dark purple mantle, of an unknown fabric, trailed, making at each step a wide billow behind her.

From time to time the priests played on their lyres subdued, almost soundless, chords. During the intervals of the music could be detected the clinking of her gold chainlet and the rhythmic rustle of her papyrus sandals. No person as yet recognised her. It was only known that she lived in seclusion, devoted to pious practices. At night the soldiers had seen her, kneeling before the stars, on the summit of the palace, amid smoke curling up from lighted censers.

At this moment the moon made her appear very pale, and something of the gods seemed to envelop her like a subtle mist. Her eyes seemed to penetrate far away beyond terrestrial space. She advanced with bent head, holding in her right hand a small ebony lyre. They heard her murmur:

"Dead! all dead! No longer will you obey my voice when I sit on the lake shore and throw watermelon pips into your mouths! In the depths of your eyes, more limpid than river water, rolled the mystery of Tanit!" Then she called her fish by their several names, which were the names of the months—"Siv! Sivan! Tammoûz! Eloul! Tischri! Schebar!—Ah, goddess, have pity on me!"

Without understanding her meaning, the soldiers crowded around her, amazed at her attire. She cast upon them a long, frightened look; then, dropping her head to her bosom, she threw out her arms, repeating many times: "What have you done? What have you done? For your enjoyment bread, meat, oil, and malobathrum were provided from the storehouses; I even had oxen brought from Hecatompylus, and sent hunters into the desert that you might have all sorts of game."

Her voice grew louder, her cheeks blazed, as she continued: "Where, then, think you that you are now? In this a conquered city, or the palace of a master? And what master! Hamilcar, the Suffete, my father, servitor of the Baalim! Your weapons now reek with the blood of his slaves, when it was he who refused them to Lutatius! Is any country of yours greater in the conduct of battles? Behold! the steps of our palace are

laden with the trophies of our victories! Continue your work, burn it to the ground! I will take away with me the genius of our mansion—my black serpent—who sleeps up there in the lotus leaves; for when I whistle he will follow me, and when I enter my galley he will glide in the wake of the vessel on the foam of the waves.”

Her delicate nostrils quivered. She crushed her nails against the jewels of her bosom. Her eyes became suffused as she continued: “Alas! Carthage! unhappy city! no longer hast thou for thy defence the strong men of former times, who traversed beyond the oceans to build in thine honour temples on foreign shores. All the lands have grown by thee, and wave with thy harvests, and the plains of the seas are ploughed by thine oars!”

Then she began to chant the adventures of Melkarth, the god of the Sidonians and founder of her family. She told how he had ascended the mountains of Ersiphonia, journeyed to Tartessus, and waged war against Masisabal to avenge the Queen of the Serpents.

“He pursued the female monster, whose tail undulated like a rivulet of silver over dead leaves into the forest; and he came to a prairie the colour of blood, over which the moon shone refulgent within a pale circle; and there he found women, half dragons, grouped around a huge fire, poised erect on their tails, thrusting out and curving their scarlet tongues, forked like fishermen’s harpoons, to the very edge of the flames.”

Then, without pausing, Salammbô recounted how Melkarth, after vanquishing Masisabal, had put the decapitated head of his victim at the prow of his ship: “At each surge of the waves it was plunged in the foam; and it was embalmed by the sun until it became harder than gold, yet tears never ceased flowing from the eyes, but dropped continuously into the water.” All this she chanted in old Canaanite dialect, which the Barbarians did not understand.

They inquired of one another what she could be saying to them, and why she accompanied her words with such terrifying

gestures. Mounted upon the tables, the benches, and the branches of sycamores, with open mouths and outstretched necks, they endeavoured to grasp the vague stories that drifted before their imaginations, through the obscurity of the theogonies, like phantoms in the cloud.

Only the beardless priests understood Salammbô. Their shrivelled hands tremblingly clutched the strings of their lyres, upon which from time to time they struck a mournful chord; they were more feeble than old women, and shivered as much from fear as with mystic emotion, not knowing what the soldiers might be tempted to do. The Barbarians noticed them not, for they were intent in listening to the chanting maiden.

None watched her more fixedly than a young Numidian chief who sat among the captains, surrounded by the soldiers of his own nation. His girdle so bristled with darts that it made a projection beneath his wide mantle, fastened to his temples by a leather lacing; this garment divided and swung down over his shoulders in such a manner as to keep effectually his face in shadow, concealing all but his gleaming eyes. It was by chance that he attended this feast. His father, conforming to the custom adopted by kings of sending their sons to live in noble families in other dominions, in order to prepare for noble alliances, had sent him to abide with Barca. During the six months that Narr' Havas had been in Carthage, he had never before seen Salammbô; and now sitting on his heels, his head resting against the handles of his javelins, he gazed at her with nostrils distended, like a leopard crouching in a jungle.

At the other side of the tables was a Libyan of colossal stature, with short, curly black hair. He was unarmed, save for his military jacket, the brass plates of which were fraying the purple covering of the couch. A necklace of silver moons was entangled in the hairs on his breast; splashes of blood spotted his face; he leaned on his left elbow, with wide-open mouth, and smiled.

Salammbô abandoned the sacred chant resorting successively to the various barbaric dialects, and with delicate subtlety seek-

ing to soften their anger, speaking Greek to the Greeks; then turning towards the Ligurians, the Campanians, and the Negroes in turn, till each, in listening, found in her voice the sweetness of his native tongue.

Carried away by the memories of Carthage, she chanted the old battles against Rome, thus gaining their applause. Becoming excited by the flashing of the naked swords, she cried out, with open arms. Her lyre fell, then, relapsing into silence, she pressed her heart with both hands, thus resting for some minutes with closed eyes as though to drink in the excitement of all these warriors.

Mâtho, the Libyan, leaned toward her; involuntarily she approached him, and moved by recognition of his pride, she poured out for him into a gold cup a long stream of wine in token of her reconciliation with the army.

"Drink!" she said.

He took the proffered cup, and was carrying it to his lips, when a Gaul, the same Gisco had wounded, slapped him across the shoulders, uttering in a jovial manner insinuating pleasantries in his native language. Spendius, who was near by, volunteered to interpret.

"Speak," said Mâtho.

"The gods be with you, for you are about to become rich. When will the bridal be?"

"What bridal?" asked Mâtho.

"Thine; for with us," said the Gaul, "when a woman offers drink to a warrior she proffers him her couch."

Spendius had hardly interpreted before Narr' Havas sprang forward, pulling from his belt a javelin, poised his right foot on the edge of a table, and hurled the weapon at Mâtho. The javelin sped between the cups, and passed through the Libyan's arm, nailing it firmly to the table, with such momentum as to cause the shaft to vibrate in the air. Mâtho quickly jerked it out; but, as he was weaponless, in his rage he lifted up the heavily laden table, and pitched it against Narr' Havas. In the midst of the crowd that rushed between the two infuriated men, Numidians and the soldiers mingled so closely that they

could not draw their swords. Mâtho moved forward, butting savagely. Finally, when he raised his head to look about, Narr' Havas had disappeared; Salammbô had also gone. Turning his eyes toward the palace, he noticed that the red door near the summit, quartered with a black cross, was just closing, and he darted off toward it. He could be seen running between the prows of the galleys, disappearing and reappearing successively the length of the three stairways till he at last reached the red door; this he threw himself against with all his weight, but to no avail. Panting, breathless, he leaned against the wall to keep from falling.

A man had followed him, and as he crossed the shadows—for the lights of the feast were obscured by an angle of the palace—he recognised Spendius.

"Begone!" he said.

The slave, without answering, began to tear his tunic with his teeth; then kneeling beside Mâtho he took hold of his arm, gently feeling in the dark to discover the wound. Under a ray of moonlight that just then gleamed between the clouds, Spendius saw in the middle of the arm a gaping wound; he wrapped around it the strips he had torn off from his tunic; but Mâtho irritably said:

"Leave me! leave me!"

"No!" replied the slave, "you delivered me from the *ergastulum*. I am yours! you are my master! Command me!"

Keeping close against the wall, Mâtho made a circuit of the terrace, listening at every step; glancing at intervals through the golden trellises into the silent apartments. At last he paused in despair.

"Listen," said the slave. "Do not despise me for my weakness; I have lived in this palace, I can crawl like a viper between its walls. Come, there is in the Chamber of the Ancestors an ingot of gold under each tile, and an underground passage leading to their tombs."

"Well, what of that?" asked Mâtho.

Spendius was silent.

Standing on the terrace, an immense expanse of shadow

spread out before them that seemed full of vague forms, like the gigantic billows of a black, petrified ocean. Toward the east a luminous bar appeared; and to the left, the canals of Megara began to outline with their white sinuosities the verdant gardens. The conical roofs of the heptagonal temples, the stairways, the terraces, the ramparts, all became palely defined in the early dawn; and surrounding the peninsula of Carthage a girdle of white foam curled, and the foam of emerald sea seemed congealing in the coolness of morning. As the rosy sky widened, the tall mansions climbing up the slope rose higher and massed together, like a herd of black goats descending the mountains. The deserted streets stretched out; motionless palm trees jutted beyond the walls; the overflowing cisterns glistened like silver shields lost in the courtyards; on the promontory of Hermæum the lighthouse beacon grew dimmer. On the summit of the Acropolis in the cypress-groves the horses of Eschmoûn, just sensing the light, placed the hoofs of their forefeet upon the marble parapet, neighing towards the rising sun. It appeared. Spendius lifted his arms and uttered a cry of adoration.

The whole world seemed pulsating in a ruddy flood, for the god, as if rending himself, poured forth in fulsome rays upon Carthage the golden rain of his veins. The prows of the galleys glittered, the roof of Khamoûn appeared ablaze, and through the open doors lights could be descried in the interior of the temple. The wheels of large chariots coming from the country to the city marts, rumbled over the pavements; dromedaries loaded with baggage descended the slopes; money-changers in the thoroughfares took down the weather-boards from their shops; storks took to flight, and white sails fluttered, athrill with the glory of day.

From the groves of Tanit could be heard the tambourines of the sacred courtesans; and at the point of Mappals the furnaces for the baking of clay coffins began to smoke.

Spendius leaning over the terrace, gnashed his teeth, repeating, "Ah, yes, . . . yes, . . . master, I understand why you just now disdained to pillage the mansion."

Mâtho was aroused by the murmur of the man's voice, yet he did not seem to understand.

Spendius resumed, "Ah, what wealth! and the men who possess it have not even the weapons to protect it." Then, with his right hand extended, he pointed out some people who were crawling on the sand outside of the pier, seeking for gold dust.

"Look!" he exclaimed, "the Republic is like those wretched ones grovelling on the sea-beach. She also plunges her greedy arms into the sea-sands, and the roar of the billows so fills her ears that she hears not behind her the step of a master!"

Drawing Mâtho along to the end of the terrace, the slave pointed out the garden wherein the sun shone on the soldiers' swords that were hanging in the trees.

"But here be strong men, made reckless by hatred; and they owe no allegiance to Carthage, neither families, nor oaths, nor gods!"

Mâtho still leaned against the wall. Spendius drew nearer, continuing in a low voice:

"Do you comprehend me, soldier? We shall go about arrayed in purple like satraps. We shall bathe in perfumes. I too shall have my slaves! Do you not weary of drinking camp vinegar, and of the sound of the trumpets? You think that you will rest some day? When they pull off your cuirass to throw your body to the vultures! or possibly when leaning on a staff, blind, feeble, lame, you hobble about from portal to portal and recount to the pickle vendors and to the little children the tale of your youth! Recall all the injustice of your chiefs, the encampments in the snow, the forced marches, exposure to the sun, tyrannical discipline, and the eternal threat of the cross! After so much misery, a collar of honour is given to you, as one hangs a girdle of bells around asses' necks to divert them on their toilsome marches and render them less sensible to their fatigue. A man like you, braver than Pyrrhus! If you desire no more, very good! Ah, but you would be happy in the great, cool halls, listening to the sound of lyres as you repose on flowers, surrounded by buffoons and women! Do not tell me

it is impossible! Have not the Mercenaries already seized Rhegium and other strong places in Italy? Who can hinder you? Hamilcar is absent; the people execrate the rich; Gisco has no power over the cowards who surround him; but you have courage, the soldiers will obey you. Command them! Carthage is ours; let us fall upon it!"

"No!" said Mâtho; "the curse of Moloch weighs upon me. I felt it in her eyes, and just now I saw a black ram recoil in the temple!" then adding, as he looked around him: "Where is she?"

Spendius now understood that a great inquietude absorbed Mâtho, and he dared not speak again.

Behind him the trees still smoked; and from the charred branches carcasses of half-burned apes tumbled down from time to time among the dishes; drunken soldiers with open mouths snored by the side of corpses; and those who were awake lowered their heads, dazzled by the glare of the sun. The trampled earth was covered with bloody pools. The elephants swayed their bleeding trunks between the pickets of their paddocks. In the open granaries could be seen sacks of wheat scattered about, and under the gateways a compact line of chariots heaped up by the Barbarians; in the cedars, peacocks perched, spreading their tails and beginning to utter their cry.

Mâtho's immobility astonished Spendius. He was now even paler than before, and his eyes fixedly followed some object apparently visible on the horizon, as he leaned with both hands on the edge of the terrace, Spendius also, leaning over, discovered what thus occupied him. In the distance a point of gold turned in the dust on the road leading to Utica. It was the axle of a chariot drawn by two mules, guided by a slave who ran at the end of the pole, holding the bridle. Two women were seated in the chariot. The manes of the mules were puffed out in Persian fashion between their ears, beneath a network of blue pearls.

Spendius, recognizing them, suppressed a cry. A wide veil floated behind in the breeze.

II:

A T S I C C A



THE mercenaries left Carthage two days later. Each soldier had received a piece of gold, upon the stipulated condition that he would go into camp at Sicca, and they had been told, with abundant flattery: "You are the saviours of Carthage, but you will certainly starve her if you remain here, for the city will become insolvent. You must, for your own sake, withdraw; and by such a consideration you will secure the goodwill of the Republic. We will immediately levy taxes to complete your payment, and galleys shall be equipped to carry you to your native countries."

The soldiers did not know what to reply to such talk. These men, accustomed to war, weary of sojourning in the city, were not difficult to convince. The entire populace of Carthage mounted on the city walls to watch them depart, as they defiled through the street of Khamoûn by the gate of Cirta, pell-mell—archers with hoplites, captains with common soldiers, Lusitanians with Greeks. They marched boldly, making their heavy cothurns ring on the pavements. Their armour was dented by the catapults, their faces were sunburnt from long exposure on battle-fields. From their mouths, covered with heavy beards, rasping yells issued; their torn coats of mail rattled upon the hilts of their swords, and through the rents

in the metal were revealed naked limbs as terrible as war-engines. Sarissas, spears, felt caps, and bronze helmets all swayed as by a single motion. This long array of armed men poured forth between the six-storied mansions daubed with bitumen, making the very walls crack as they overflowed the street. From behind iron or wicker grills, the women, veiled and silent, watched the Barbarians pass.

The terraces, the fortifications, and the walls were hidden under the throng of Carthaginians attired in black; the sailors' tunics looked like spots of blood amongst this sombre multitude. Children, almost naked, gesticulated in the foliage of the columns, or between the branches of the palm-trees. The Elders took their position on the platforms of the towers; and no one knew why a man with a long beard kept moving from place to place, in a thoughtful attitude. In the distance he appeared indistinct as a phantom, and at times as motionless as the stones.

All were oppressed by the same fear, dreading lest the Barbarians, realizing their strength, might desire to remain. But they departed with such assurance that the Carthaginians were gradually emboldened to mingle with the soldiers, overwhelming them with gifts and protestations. Some, in an access of cunning and audacious hypocrisy, begged them not to leave the city. They threw flowers, perfumes, and pieces of money; others gave away their amulets, worn to ward off illness and harm, but first spat upon them three times in order to dispel their intrinsic charm, and attract death; or, to make the hearts of the recipients cowardly, they enclosed jackal's hair in the talismans; others would invoke aloud the blessing of Melkarth, but in a whisper implore his curse.

Following the soldiers came a mass of baggage, beasts of burden, and stragglers. The sick groaned on the backs of dromedaries, while others limped along, supporting themselves on broken spears. The bibulous carried wine-skins, the gluttonous took quarters of meat, cakes, fruits, and butter done up in fig leaves, and snow packed in canvas bags. Some were observed holding parasols, and others had parrots perched on

their shoulders, or were followed by dogs, gazelles, or panthers. Libyan women, mounted on asses, heaped invectives upon the Negresses who had forsaken the brothels of Malqua to go with the soldiers; many suckled the infants suspended from their bosoms in a leather leash. Mules, urged by their drivers with the points of spears, bent under the heavy burden of tents heaped on their backs. The train also included a number of varlets and water-carriers, feeble and yellow from fevers, filthy with vermin, the scum of the plebeian Carthaginians who had attached themselves to the Barbarian troops.

As soon as they had all passed out, the gates were closed behind them. Still the people did not descend from the walls. The army spread quickly over the width of the isthmus, and divided in unequal detachments, until the lances appeared like tall blades of grass; finally all were lost to sight in clouds of dust, and the soldiers, looking back at Carthage, could only distinguish its long wall with the vacant battlements outlined against the sky.

Then the Barbarians heard a great shout. Not knowing the exact number of their troops, they thought that some of their comrades had lingered behind in the city to amuse themselves by plundering a temple. They laughed heartily over this idea as they continued on their way. Once more marching together through the open country, they were full of joy, and the Greeks sang the old song of the Mamertines:

“With my lance and my sword I sow
And I reap; I am master of the house!
The disarmed must fall at my feet,
And call me ‘Lord’ and ‘King’!”

They shouted, leaped, and the gayest narrated stories, for the period of their miseries was past. Upon reaching Tunis, some of the soldiers noticed that a troop of Balearic slingers was missing; but, assuming that they could not be far behind, no further thought was given to them.

At Tunis some lodged in the houses, others camped at the foot of the walls, and the people of the city came out to talk

with them. All night long fires blazed on the horizon in the direction of Carthage, and the flames, like gigantic torches, stretched over the surface of the motionless lake: yet no one in the army could guess what festival was being celebrated.

The next day the Barbarians crossed a tract of well cultivated country. Patricians' farmhouses succeeded one another along the edge of the route, irrigating ditches flowed through palm-groves, olive-trees formed long green lanes, rosy vapours floated in the gorges of the hills, and blue mountains towered up behind. A warm wind was blowing. Chameleons crawled over the broad cactus-leaves. The Barbarians marched in isolated detachments one after another, at long intervals and with slackened speed. They ate grapes from the vines, slept on the grass, and looked in dull astonishment at the large, artificially twisted horns of the cattle, the sheep covered with skins to protect their wool, the furrows, intercrossing in lozenge-like patterns; then they scanned the ploughs, with shares like the flukes of a ship's anchor, and the pomegranates watered with silphium. The opulence of the earth, and all these ingenious agricultural inventions, truly amazed them.

With faces upturned to the stars, they stretched themselves at night upon their unfolded tents, regretfully thinking of the delights of Hamilcar's feast as they fell asleep.

In the middle of the following day they halted on the banks of a river amidst bushes of laurel-roses. Throwing aside their lances, bucklers, and belts, they plunged into the water, shouting as they bathed, drinking out of their helmets or from the stream as they lay flat on the ground, surrounded by the beasts of burden from whose backs the baggage was falling.

Spendius, seated on a dromedary stolen from Hamilcar's parks, spied Mâtho at a distance, steadily looking in the running water while his mule drank. His wounded arm was hanging against his chest, he was bareheaded, and his face was down-cast. The slave ran through the crowd, calling out: "Master! Master!"

Mâtho gave him slight thanks for his blessings. Spendius, not heeding the rebuff, followed on behind him, and from time

to time turned his eyes restlessly toward Carthage. Spendius was the son of a Greek rhetorician and a Campanian courtesan. He became rich by selling women; then was ruined by a wreck; after which, with the Samnite shepherds, he made war against the Romans, was captured, escaped, and was then retaken. During his captivity he had worked in the quarries, panted in the sweating-baths, shrieked in the tortures, passed into the hands of various masters, and experienced many misfortunes. One day, in despair, he plunged into the sea off a trireme on which he had pulled an oar. The sailors picked him up as drowning, and took him to Carthage to the *ergastulum* of Megara; but as the fugitives were finally to be delivered back to the Romans, he had profited by the prevailing confusion to fly with the soldiers. During the entire march he remained near Mâtho, attending to his food, assisting him to mount and dismount, and at night placing a carpet under his head. Touched by such persistent attentions, Mâtho's tongue was gradually loosened.

Mâtho was born on the Gulf of Syrtis; his father had taken him on a pilgrimage to the temple of Ammon; he had hunted elephants in the forests of the Garamantes, and afterward had engaged himself in the service of Carthage. After the capture of Drepanum he had been appointed tetrarch. The Republic was in Mâtho's debt for four horses, twenty-three *medimni* of wheat, and one winter's pay. He feared the gods, and wished to die in his native country.

Spendius talked to him of his travels, his people, and the temples that he had visited; he knew many things: how to make sandals, boar-spears, and nets; how to tame wild animals, and how to cure fish. From time to time he interrupted his story to utter a harsh deep-chested cry, at which Mâtho's mule quickened its pace and the others followed; then Spendius would resume his tale, still shaken by his grief. On the evening of the fourth day he became calm.

Side by side they marched, at the right of the army on the flank of a hill; the plain below stretching away until indistinguishable in the evening mists. The lines of soldiers, defiling below them, undulated through the darkness. From time to

time, as they passed over moonlit heights, a star would quiver on the shining points of the moving spears, or for an instant mirror itself on the helmets, then disappear, to be continually succeeded by others. In the distance could be heard the bleating of wakened flocks, and an infinite sweetness seemed to envelop the earth.

Spendius, with head thrown back and eyes half-closed, breathed in the fresh breeze with deep inhalations, throwing out his arms, and moving his fingers restlessly, the better to feel the caressing air upon his body. He was carried away by renewed hopes of vengeance. He pressed his hand over his mouth to prevent sobs escaping his lips, and half swooning in his intoxication, he dropped the dromedary's halter; but the animal continued to move forward with long, regular strides. Mâtho had relapsed into his former melancholy; his long legs hung down to the ground, and the grasses, rubbing against his cothurns, rustled constantly.

The road stretched out endlessly, for at the extremity of every plain it came to a round plateau, then descended into a valley; and the mountains, that in the distance seemed to enclose the horizon, slipped away as they were approached. Now and then a river might be seen flowing through the verdure of tamarisks, only to lose itself at a turn of the hills. Occasionally an immense rock stood up like the prow of a ship, or like the pedestal of some vanished statue. At regular intervals they passed little quadrangular temples, serving as shelters for the pilgrims journeying to Sicca. They were as firmly closed as tombs. The Libyans knocked loudly against the doors but no one responded from within.

At this point cultivation became rare. They came upon strips of sand bristling with clumps of thorns; flocks of sheep browsed among the stones, watched over by a woman about whose waist was a blue fleece-girdle. When she saw the soldiers' spears between the rocks, she fled screaming.

They were marching through a wide passage, formed by two chains of reddish hillocks, when a nauseous odour struck their

nostrils, and they saw an extraordinary sight at the top of a carob tree: a lion's head standing up above the foliage.

Hastening toward it, they found a lion attached to a cross by its four limbs, like a criminal; his enormous muzzle hung to his breast, and his fore-paws, half hidden beneath the abundance of his mane, were widely spread apart, like the wings of a bird; under the tightly drawn skin, his ribs protruded and his hind legs were nailed together, but were slightly drawn up; black blood had trickled through the hairs, and collected in stalactites at the end of his tail, which hung straight down the length of the cross. The soldiers crowded around the beast, amusing themselves by calling him: "Consul!" and "Citizen of Rome!" and threw pebbles into his eyes to drive away the swarming gnats.

A hundred paces farther on they came upon two more lions; then presently appeared a long row of crosses supporting yet other lions. Some had been dead a long time, for nothing remained against the wooden crosses save the débris of their skeletons; and their half-corroded jaws were distorted in horrible grimaces. Others were of such huge size that the shafts of the crosses bent beneath their great weight and swayed in the wind, so that flocks of ravenous vultures circled high in the air without daring to alight.

Thus it was that the Carthaginian peasantry revenged themselves when they captured ferocious beasts, hoping by such examples to terrify others. The Barbarians ceased their laughter, relapsing into a deep amazement. "What people is this," thought they, "which finds amusement in crucifying lions?"

The men from the north were vaguely disturbed, anxious, and already ill. They tore their hands on the aloe thorns, large mosquitoes buzzed in their ears, and dysentery was attacking the army. They were disheartened because they could not yet see Sicca, and fearful lest they should be lost and perish in the desert—the region of sands and terrors. Many refused to advance further; others took the road back towards Carthage.

On the seventh evening, after following the base of a moun-

tain for a long time, the road abruptly turned to the right, and beyond loomed up a line of walls, resting upon and blending with white rocks. Suddenly the entire city rose before them. Blue, yellow, and white veils fluttered along on the walls in the blush of the evening, as the priestesses of Tanit came forward to receive the soldiers; there they waited, ranged along the length of the rampart, striking tambourines, playing lyres, clattering castanets, while the sun's rays, as it set behind the Numidian mountains, gleamed between the harpstrings and their bare, outstretched arms. At intervals the instruments were silenced; then a strident cry rang out furious and frenzied, a sort of barking produced by clacking their tongues against the corners of their mouths. Those who were not playing remained motionless, leaning on their elbows with their chins pressed in the palms of their hands, more immobile than sphinxes—darting glances from their large, black eyes at the advancing army.

Although Sicca was a sacred city, it could not house such a multitude, for the temple and its dependencies occupied half of its area; so Barbarians camped on the plain, at their ease. Those who were disciplined took up regular quarters; others arranged themselves by nationalities or according to their own fancies.

The Greeks pitched their tents of skin in parallel rows; Iberians arranged their canvas canopies in a circle; Gauls made wooden huts; Libyans constructed cabins of dry stones; the Negroes scratched out holes in the sand in which they slept; and many, not knowing what to do with themselves, wandered about amongst the baggage, and at night lay on the ground rolled up in their ragged mantles.

The plain spread around them, bounded on all sides by mountains; here and there a palm-tree drooped above a sand-hill; firs and oaks dotted the sides of precipices. Sometimes a rain cloud would hang in one part of the sky like a long scarf, while the rest of the country remained blue and serene; then a warm wind would drive before it whirlwinds of sand. A

stream descended in cascades from the heights of Sicca, where upon brazen columns rose the golden-roofed temple of the Carthaginian Venus, ruler of the country. The goddess seemed to fill it with her soul. By the heavings of the earth, by the changes of temperature and the play of lights, she manifested the extravagance of her authority with the beauty of her eternal smile. The summits of the mountains were crescent shaped; others resembled the bosom of a woman offering her swelling breasts. Surmounting their fatigues the Barbarians felt an overwhelming sense of this reigning influence, full of soft delights.

Spendius had bought a slave with the money received from the sale of his dromedary. All day long he slept before Mâtho's tent; imagining in his dreams that he heard the whirr of the lash, he would wake and pass his hands over the scars on his legs, marks of the irons he had worn so long; then he would fall asleep again.

Mâtho accepted the companionship of Spendius, who, wearing a long sword at his side, escorted him like a lictor. Sometimes he would even rest his arm on Spendius' shoulder, for the latter was short.

One evening, as they were traversing the camp streets, they saw a number of men robed in white mantles, and in their midst was Narr' Havas, the Numidian prince. Mâtho trembled. "Your sword!" cried he. "I will kill him!"

"Not yet," replied Spendius, restraining him. Narr' Havas was already coming toward them.

He kissed his thumbs as a sign of alliance, attributing his anger to the drunkenness of the feast; then he spoke at length against Carthage, but he did not say what had brought him to the Barbarians.

"Was it to betray them or the Republic?" Spendius wondered to himself; and as he anticipated profit from all disturbances, he felt grateful to Narr' Havas for the future treacheries of which he suspected him.

The Numidian chief remained among the Mercenaries; he seemed desirous to attach Mâtho to himself. He sent him fattened goats, gold-dust, and ostrich-plumes. The Libyan,

amazed by these tokens of favour, hesitated whether to respond amicably, or to resent them; but Spendius appeased him, and Mâtho, irresolute and in an invincible torpor, like one who had partaken of some deadly potion, allowed himself to be governed by his slave.

One morning, when the three started off on a lion-hunt, Narr' Havas concealed a poniard under his mantle. Spendius, who observed the act, walked continually behind him; hence they returned without the Numidian having had an opportunity to draw the weapon. Upon another occasion Narr' Havas led them a very long way, in fact, to the boundaries of his own kingdom; they entered a narrow gorge, and Narr' Havas smilingly declared that he no longer knew the road; but Spendius found it again.

But more often, Mâtho, who was as melancholy as an augur, would set out at daybreak to wander over the countryside. He would stretch himself out on the sand and lie motionless until evening.

He consulted, one after another, all the soothsayers in the army: those who observed the trails of serpents, those who studied the stars, and those who blew on the ashes of the dead. He swallowed galbanum, meadow-saxifrage, and the venom of vipers, supposed to freeze the heart. He summoned the Negro women, who, chanting barbaric words by moonlight, pricked the skin of his forehead with golden stilettos. He loaded himself with amulets and charms, invoking one after another Baal-Khamoûn, Moloch, the seven Cabiri, Tanit, and the Grecian Venus; he engraved a name on a copper plate, and buried it at the threshold of his tent. Spendius could hear him constantly moaning and talking to himself. One night he ventured to enter his master's tent. Mâtho, naked as a corpse, was lying flat on a lion's skin, his face buried in his hands; a suspended lamp lit up his armour, hung against the tent-pole.

"You are in pain?" asked the slave. "What do you want? Tell me!" and he shook him by the shoulders, calling him several times "Master! Master!"

Mâtho raised his large, troubled eyes towards him.



"I FEAR HER, SPENDIUS!"

"Listen!" he said in a deep voice, with one finger on his lips; "it is the wrath of the gods! The daughter of Hamilcar pursues me! I fear her, Spendius!" then he pressed his hands against his breast, like a child terrified by a ghost. "Speak to me! I am ill! I wish to cure myself. I have tried everything; but you, mayhap you, know of stronger gods, or some compelling invocation?"

"To what purpose?" asked Spendius.

Mâtho struck his head with his fists: "To free me from her!" Then, as though speaking to himself, with long pauses between his words, he said: "Doubtless I am the victim of a holocaust she has promised to the gods. . . . She holds me bound by an invisible chain. . . . If I walk, she is beside me; when I pause, she stops. . . . Her eyes burn me. . . . I hear her voice. . . . She surrounds, she penetrates me. . . . It seems that she has become my soul! And yet, between us flow the invisible waves of a boundless ocean! She is remote and inaccessible! The splendour of her beauty clothes her in a mist of light; at moments I think I never saw her—that she does not exist—that it is all a dream!"

Thus Mâtho wept in the darkness. The Barbarians slept. Spendius, looking at him, recalled the young men who, with golden vases in their hands, had supplicated him, when he paraded his troops of courtesans through the cities. A feeling of pity touched him, and he said:

"Be strong, my master! Call upon your will, and no longer implore the gods; they do not heed the cries of men! See, you cry out like a coward! Are you not humiliated that a woman should cause you to suffer thus?"

"Am I a child?" said Mâtho. "Do you think that their faces and their songs weaken me? We kept them at Drepanum to sweep out our stables. . . . I have possessed them amid sieges, under crumbling walls, while the catapults yet vibrated! . . . But that woman! Spendius, she!" . . .

The slave interrupted him:

"If she were not the daughter of Hamilcar!"

"No!" exclaimed Mâtho. "She has nothing like unto any

other daughter of man! Have you not seen her glorious eyes under her great curved eyebrows, like suns beneath triumphal arches? Remember, when she appeared, how all the lamps paled, and between the diamonds of her collar glimpses of her bosom shone resplendently—how behind her floated an odour like the perfumes from a temple, and something came forth from her entire being more fragrant than wine, and more terrible than death! . . . She moves. . . . She stops.”

He remained open-mouthed, his head lowered, eyes fixed.

“But I desire her! I must have her! I am dying for her! The thought of holding her in my arms fills me with a frenzy of rapture; and yet, withal, I hate her! Spendius, I want to overcome her! How can I do it? I could sell myself to become her slave. You were her slave; you could see her. Tell me of her—does she not go out on the terrace of her palace every night? Ah! the stones must thrill under her sandals, and the stars themselves bend down to gaze at her!”

He fell back in an access of passion, moaning like a wounded bull.

Then Mâtho sang: “Through the forest, he pursued the female monster, whose tail undulated over the dead leaves like a rivulet of silver.” And, modulating his voice, he imitated Salammbô’s, while his extended hands feigned to touch lightly the strings of a lyre.

To all the consolations offered by Spendius, he kept repeating the same words. The nights were passed in lamentations and exhortations. Mâtho endeavoured to deaden his senses in wine, but after his orgy had passed, he would become sadder than ever. Then he tried to distract his thoughts by playing knuckle-bone, and lost, one by one, the gold plaques of his collar. He even visited the hand-maidens of the goddess, but afterward descended the hillside in sobs, like one returning from a funeral.

Spendius, on the contrary, became more daring and gay; he might be seen in the leaf-thatched taverns, discoursing with the soldiers. He repaired the old cuirasses. He juggled with swords. He gathered herbs in the fields for the sick. He was facetious,

subtle, full of inventions and words; and the Barbarians became accustomed to his services, and grew to like him.

Meanwhile they awaited an ambassador from Carthage, who was to bring them, on mule-back, baskets filled with gold; and continually making the same calculations, they would figure on the sand with their fingers. Each man arranged his future course of life; one planned to have concubines, another slaves or lands, and others thought that they would bury their treasures, or risk them on a vessel. But during this protracted season of idleness, there were temperamental clashes; there were constant disputes between the cavalry and infantry, the Barbarians and the Greeks, and above the wrangles of the men could ever be heard the shrill voices of the women.

Day after day men drifted into camp, nearly naked, wearing grasses on their heads to protect them from the sun; they were debtors of rich Carthaginians, and had been forced to till the lands, but had escaped. Libyans poured in, accompanied by peasants ruined by taxes, exiles and all kinds of malefactors. Then came crowds of merchants, and vendors of oil and wine, all furious because they had not received their money, denouncing the Republic. Spendius declaimed against it. Soon the provisions diminished. They talked of moving in a body on Carthage, and of calling upon the Romans.

One evening, during the supper hour, heavy creaking sounds were heard, and in the distance appeared something red moving over the undulations of the land. It was a great purple litter, ornamented at the corners with bunches of ostrich plumes; crystal chains, interwoven with garlands of pearls, beat against the closed hangings. Each stride made by the camels that followed it rang large bells suspended from their breast-plates, and on all sides of them was to be seen an escort of cavalry, clad from head to feet in an armour of golden scales.

The cavalcade halted three hundred paces from the camp, to draw up from the sheaths which they carried behind them their round bucklers, Bœotian helmets, and broadswords. Some

of the men remained with the camels, the others resumed their march. At last appeared the insignia of the Republic, blue wooden poles, terminated by horses' heads or pine-cones. The Barbarians all arose cheering, and the women rushed toward the Guards of the Legion and kissed their feet.

The litter advanced on the shoulders of twelve Negroes, who marched together with a short, rapid step. They turned uncertainly to right and left, much embarrassed by the tent-ropes and animals moving about, and by the tripods where meats were cooking. Occasionally a fat hand laden with rings would half open the curtain, and a harsh voice cry out reproaches; then the bearers would halt, turn about, and try another road through the camp.

When the purple curtains were lifted there was disclosed on a large pillow an impassive, bloated human head. The eyebrows, meeting above the nose, formed two ebony arches; gold dust glittered in the crimped hair; and the face was so ghastly that it seemed powdered over with marble-dust; the remainder of the body was hidden under the fleeces that filled the litter. In this man the soldiers recognized the Suffete Hanno, the one whose negligence had helped to lose the battle of the Ægatian islands. In his victory at Hecatompylus over the Libyans, he had acted with seeming clemency, although he was thought by the Barbarians to have been actuated by cupidity, as he had sold to his own profit all the captives, subsequently reporting to the Republic that they were dead.

After looking for some time for a convenient place from which to address the soldiers, Hanno signalled the litter to stop, and assisted by two slaves he alighted and placed his tottering feet on the ground. They were clad in black felt boots, studded with silver moons; bands like those that encase a mummy enwrapped his legs, the flesh protruding where the linen strips crossed. His stomach extended beyond the scarlet jacket that covered his thighs; and the folds of his neck fell down on his breast like the dewlaps of an ox; his tunic, on which flowers were painted, split at the armpits; he also wore a scarf, a girdle, and a great black mantle with laced double

sleeves. The abundance of his clothing, his collar of blue gems, his gold clasps and his heavy earrings rendered even more hideous, if possible, his physical deformities. He appeared like some gross idol, roughly hewn out of a block of stone, for a pale leprosy covered his entire body, imparting to him the aspect of a lifeless thing. His nose, however, hooked like a vulture's beak, dilated violently, as he inhaled the air, and his small eyes, with their gummed lashes, flashed with a hard, metallic glitter. He held in one hand an aloe spatula, wherewith to scratch his diseased skin.

Finally two heralds sounded their silver horns; the tumult subsided, and Hanno began to speak.

He commenced with a eulogy of the gods and the Republic, saying that the Barbarians ought to congratulate themselves on having served Carthage; but they should also be reasonable, for the times were hard: "and if a master had only three olives, was it not just that he keep two for himself?"

Thus the old Suffete interpolated throughout his speech proverbs and apologies, nodding his head all the time to solicit approbation. He spoke in the Punic language, and those who surrounded him—the most alert, who had run thither without their weapons—were Campanians, Gauls, and Greeks, so that no one in the immediate crowd understood him. Perceiving this, Hanno paused to reflect, meanwhile rocking himself heavily from one leg to the other. The idea occurred to him to gather together the captains, and his heralds cried out the order in Greek, the language which had served for word of command in the Carthaginian armies since the time of Xanthippus.

The guards with blows of their whips dispersed the mob of soldiers, and soon the captains of the phalanxes, drilled like the Spartans and the chiefs of the Barbaric cohorts, came forward wearing the insignia of their rank, and the armour of their nation.

Night was falling; here and there blazed the fires; a great tumult stirred the encampment; and they went from one to another, asking, "What has he brought?" and "Why does not the Suffete distribute the money?"

He was explaining the infinite obligations of the Republic to the captains and chiefs; her treasury was empty; the Roman tribute overwhelmed her; in fact: "We do not know what to do! The Republic is deserving of much pity!"

From time to time he rubbed his limbs with his aloe spatula, or even paused to drink, from a silver cup held to his lips by a slave, a decoction of ashes of weasels and asparagus boiled in vinegar; then, after drying his mouth with a scarlet napkin, he resumed:

"That which used to be worth only one shekel of silver costs to-day three shekels of gold, and the farms abandoned during the war yield nothing. Our purple fisheries are almost lost; even pearls have become exorbitant; and it is with difficulty that we can obtain sufficient unguents for service to the gods! And as for articles for table consumption—this is a disaster on which I shall not dwell. For lack of galleys the spices fail, and it will be difficult to procure silphium, in consequence of the rebellions on the frontier of Cyrene. Sicily, whence we used to procure our slaves, is no longer open to us! Yesterday I gave more money for a bath-man and four kitchen-varlets than formerly I should have paid for a pair of elephants!"

He unrolled a long strip of papyrus, and read, without omitting a single figure, all the expenses that the Government had been under, for the repair of temples, paving streets, constructing vessels, coral-fisheries, the aggrandisement of the Syssites, and construction of engines for the mines in Cantabria.

But the captains had no better understanding of Punic than the soldiers, even though the Mercenaries saluted in that language. Ordinarily numerous Carthaginian officers were interspersed through the Barbaric armies to serve as interpreters, but after the recent war they had hidden, abandoning their posts, fearful of vengeance; and Hanno had not the forethought to provide himself with interpreters before setting out on his mission. His voice too was so low that it was lost in the wind.

The Greeks, girding on their iron sword-belts, listened attentively, striving to fathom his meaning; the mountaineers,

covered with skins like bears, looked distrustfully at him, or yawned, leaning on their heavy clubs studded with brass nails. The Gauls inattentively sneered, shaking their tall towers of hair; and the men of the desert, completely muffled up in grey woollen clothing, listened motionless. Men pushed forward from behind, till the Guards, crowded by the surging mob, actually swayed on their horses. Negroes held at arm's length lighted torches of fir-branches; and the big Carthaginian continued his harangue, standing in full view on a grassy mound.

Meanwhile the Barbarians grew impatient, and began to murmur. Each one apostrophised Hanno, who gesticulated with his spatula; those who wished to silence others yelled louder, thereby increasing the din.

Suddenly a man of stunted appearance bounded to Hanno's feet, snatched a trumpet from one of the heralds, blew it, and Spendius—for it was he—announced that he had something to say of importance. To this declaration rapidly repeated in five different languages, Greek, Latin, Gallic, Libyan, and Balearic, the captains, half surprised, half laughing, responded, "Speak! Speak!"

Spendius hesitated, trembled, and at last addressed the Libyans, as they were the most numerous:

"You have all heard the horrible threats of this man!"

Hanno did not remonstrate, as he knew no Libyan; so, to continue the experiment, Spendius repeated the same phrase in all the other Barbaric idioms. The soldiers looked at one another in amazement; when all, as by tacit consent, or perhaps believing that they comprehended, bowed their heads to signify agreement.

Then Spendius began in a vehement voice:

"In the first place, he has said that all the gods of other nations are but myths compared with the Carthaginian gods! He has called you all cowards, thieves, liars, dogs and sons of harlots! He has said that but for you the Republic would not now be paying the tribute to Rome, and that by your outrages you have drained Carthage of perfumes, aromatics, slaves, and silphium, as you are in league with the Nomads, on the fron-

tiers of Cyrene. You yourselves have heard! Then he has said that the offenders shall be punished, and has read the enumeration of their punishments, such as paving the roads, fitting up the vessels, embellishing the Syssites, and being forced to dig in the mines of Cantabria."

Spendius repeated all this to the Greeks, Gauls, Campanians, and Balearics. They recognized many of the proper names that Hanno had used, so were convinced that he was giving an accurate report of the Suffete's discourse. Some yelled out to him:

"You lie!"

Their voices were lost in the uproar of others, and Spendius went on:

"Do you not see that he has left a reserve force of cavalry outside the camp? At a signal from him, they are prepared to rush upon you and slay you."

At this the Barbarians turned in the direction indicated; and as the crowd was then dispersing, there appeared in their midst, moving slowly as a phantom, a human being, bent over, thin, entirely naked, and hidden almost to his thighs by his long hair, bristling with dry leaves, dust, and thorns. About his loins and knees were wisps of straw and shreds of cloth; his cadaverous skin hung to his fleshless limbs like rags on dry branches; his hands trembled continually, and he advanced leaning on an olive staff.

He came towards the Negro torch-bearers. An idiotic grin revealed his pale gums, and his great frightened eyes examined the Barbarians who gathered around him.

Suddenly uttering a cry of fright, he sprang behind the Negroes, hiding himself with their bodies, and stammered out: "Look at them! look at them!" pointing at the Suffete's Guards sitting motionless in their glistening armour, their horses pawing the ground, dazzled by the torch-lights that crackled in the darkness. The human spectre struggled and yelled, "They killed them!"

At these words, which were screamed in Balearic, the Balear-

ians drew nearer, and recognised him; but without responding to their questions, he repeated:

“Yes, killed all! all! Crushed like grapes! The fine young men! The slingers! My comrades and yours!”

They gave him wine to drink, and he wept. Then again he launched into a volley of words.

With difficulty Spendius managed to conceal his joy; even while explaining to the Greeks and Libyans all the horrible events recounted by Zarxas, he could scarcely credit such a timely and desirable coincidence. The Balearic soldiers paled on being told of the manner in which their companions had perished. A troop of three hundred slingers had landed at Carthage in the evening and overslept themselves, so that when they arrived the next morning at the square of Khamoûn, the Barbarians had already gone, and they found themselves defenseless, their clay balls having been packed upon the camels with the other army baggage. They were allowed to enter the street of Satheb, and to proceed till they reached the oaken gate lined with brass plates, when the people, by a single movement, fell upon the helpless troop.

Indeed, the soldiers recalled a great uproar; but Spendius, who had fled at the head of the columns, had not heard it.

The corpses of the slingers were placed in the arms of the *Dii-Pataci*—which surrounded the temple of Khamoûn. Then they were reproached for all the crimes committed by the Mercenaries—their gluttonies, thefts, impieties, insults, and the ruthless slaughter of the fishes in Salammbô's garden. The bodies were infamously mutilated; the priests burned their hair believing this would torture their souls; pieces of their flesh were hung up in the butchers' shops: some of the torturers even buried their teeth in the flesh; and at night, to complete the outrage, the remains were burned on pyres at the cross-ways. These, then, were the fires that had flashed so brightly in the distance over the lake. Some of the houses took fire, so the remaining bodies and the dying were hurriedly pitched over the walls. Zarxas was one of this number, and until the next day

remained in the reeds on the lake shore; then he wandered about, seeking the army by its footsteps in the dust. During the daytime he hid in caverns, continuing his march at night. With wounds unstaunched, famishing and ill, he subsisted on roots and carrion. At length one day he saw the lances on the horizon and followed them. His reason was unhinged by his fright and misery.

While he spoke, the soldiers controlled their indignation with difficulty; when he had finished, however, it burst forth like a storm; they wanted then and there to massacre the Guards and the Suffete. Some less violent objected, saying that at least he should be heard and let them know if they were to be paid.

All yelled "Our money!" Hanno replied that he had brought it.

They made a rush to the advance posts, dragging the Suffete's baggage to the centre of the camp. Without waiting for the slaves, they unfastened the baskets. In those they opened first they found hyacinth-robcs, sponges, scratchers, brushes, perfumes, and bodkins of antimony for painting the eyes—all belonging to the Guards, who were rich men accustomed to luxuries.

Then on one of the camels they found a large bronze bath-tub, in which the Suffete bathed during his march; for he took all sorts of precautions, even bringing caged weasels from Hecatompylus, to be burned alive for his decoction. And as his malady gave him an enormous appetite, he had brought a plentiful supply of comestibles—wines, pickles, meats and fish preserved in honey, and little Commagène-pots of goose-grease packed in snow and chopped straw. When the baskets were opened and the contents were displayed, the provisions were so considerable as to evoke waves of laughter.

But the wages of the Mercenaries hardly filled two esparto coffers; and even in one of these they saw the leather tokens used by the Republic to conserve their specie. The Barbarians expressing surprise, Hanno explained that their accounts were very difficult, and that the Elders had not yet found leisure to examine them. In the meantime they had sent this supply.

Everything was emptied recklessly and overturned—mules, valets, litter, provisions and baggage.

Pulling the coins from the sacks, the soldiers began to pelt Hanno with them. With great difficulty he mounted an ass, and he fled, clutching its mane; howling, crying, jolted, bruised, as he hurled back upon the army the curses of all the gods. His broad, jewelled necklace bounced up to his ears; he kept on his long, trailing mantle by clutching it between his teeth, and from afar the Barbarians yelled after him:

“Go, coward! Pig! Sewer of Moloch! Sweat out your gold and your pestilence. Faster! Faster!” In disorder the escort galloped beside him.

The fury of the Barbarians could not be appeased: they recalled that many of their number who had set out for Carthage had never returned; doubtless they had been killed. So much injustice enraged them, and they began to pull up their tent pegs, roll up their mantles, bridle their horses, each one taking his casque and sword; and in an instant everything was ready. Those who had no weapons rushed into the woods to cut bludgeons.

Day dawned: the people of Sicca awoke and bestirred themselves in the streets.

“They are going to Carthage!” it was said; and the rumour ran like wild-fire, spreading through the country.

From every pathway, from every ravine, men sprang forth. Shepherds could be seen descending the mountains, running breathlessly. When the Barbarians had gone Spendius circled the plain, mounted on a Punic stallion, accompanied by his slave, who led a third horse. A single tent remained on the field. Spendius entered it, exclaiming:

“Up, master! Awake! We are off!”

“Where are you going?” demanded Mâtho.

“To Carthage!” cried Spendius.

Mâtho bounded upon the horse which the slave was holding at the door.



III:

SALAMMÔ



THE moon rose level with the waves, and points of light and patches of white shone in the darkened city: the pole of a chariot in a courtyard, some vagrant rag of linen, the angle of a wall, or the glitter of a gold necklace on the bosom of a god. On the roofs of the temples the glass globes glittered like enormous diamonds: but half defined ruins, heaps of black earth, and gardens, made more sombre masses in the general obscurity. At the foot of Malqua, fishermen's nets stretched from house to house, like gigantic bats with outspread wings. The creaking of the hydraulic wheels that forced the water to the upper stories of the palaces had ceased. In the centre of the terraces camels tranquilly reposed, lying on their bellies like ostriches. The porters slept in the streets at the thresholds of the mansions. The colossi cast long shadows over the deserted squares. In the distance, the smoke of a still burning sacrifice escaped through the bronze tiles; and a heavy breeze carried the odour of aromatic perfumes and the scent of the sea, mingled with exhalations from the sun-baked walls. Around Carthage the motionless waters gleamed, for the moon was shedding her light at once over the gulf, enclosed by mountains, and over the lake of Tunis, where upon the banks of sand flamingoes formed long, rose-coloured lines; and farther on below

the catacombs the large salt lagoon shimmered like a lake of burnished silver. The blue dome of heaven on the one side sank into the horizon down into the dust of the plains, and on the other side faded away into the sea-mists; and on the summit of the Acropolis, the pyramidal cypresses bordering the temple of Eschmoûn swayed, murmuring like the swell of the waves that beat slowly along the mole at the foot of the ramparts.

Salammbô ascended to the upper terrace of her palace, supported by a slave, who carried an iron plate filled with burning charcoal.

In the centre of the terrace was a small ivory couch covered with lynx-skins, upon which were pillows made from the feathers of the prophetic parrots—birds consecrated to the gods—and at the four corners were long cassolettes, filled with spikenard, incense, cinnamon, and myrrh. The slave lit the perfumes. Salammbô contemplated the polar star, then slowly saluting the four quarters of the heavens knelt on the ground amid the azure powder strewn with gold stars in imitation of the firmament. Then with her elbows close against her sides, her forearms perfectly straight, and her hands open, she flung back her head beneath the rays of the moon, and chanted:

“O Rabetna! Baalet! Tanit!” Her tones continued plaintively, as if she called some one: “Anaitis! Astarte! Derceto! Astoreth! Mylitta! Athara! Elissa! Tiratha! . . . By the hidden symbols . . . by the resounding timbrels . . . by the furrows of the earth . . . by the eternal silence . . . by the everlasting fruitfulness. . . . Ruler of the shadowy sea, and of the azure shore, O Queen of all watery things, hail!”

She swayed her entire body two or three times, then with outstretched arms, threw herself face downward in the dust.

Her slave raised her quickly, for it was appointed that after such rites someone should always lift the suppliant from her prostration, as a sign that the service was acceptable in the sight of the gods; Salammbô's nurse never failed in this pious duty. This slave had been brought, when but a child, to Carthage by some merchants of Dara-Getulia, but after her emancipation she had no wish to leave her masters; as was proved by a big

hole pierced in her right ear. She wore a many-coloured striped skirt fitting tightly about her hips, falling straight down to her ankles, between which two tin rings struck against one another as she walked; her flat face was as yellow as her tunic; very long silver pins made a halo at the back of her head, and in one nostril was thrust a coral stud. She now stood beside the couch with downcast eyes, straighter than a Hermes.

Salammbô walked to the edge of the terrace; her eyes swept for an instant over the horizon, then she lowered her gaze to the sleeping city. A sigh rose from the depths of her bosom, causing her long white simarre to undulate from end to end as it hung unconfined either by pin or girdle. Her curved sandals with turned-up toes were hidden beneath a mass of emeralds; her hair was carelessly caught up in a net of purple silk.

She raised her head to contemplate the moon—mingling with her words the fragments of hymns as she murmured:

“How lightly dost thou turn, supported by the impalpable ether! It is luminous about thee, and the movement of thy changes distributes the winds and the fruitful dew; as thou waxest and wanest, the eyes of cats elongate or shorten, and the spots of the leopard are changed. Women scream thy name in the pangs of childbirth! Thou increasest the shell-fish! Thou causest the wine to ferment! Thou putrefiest the dead! Thou shapest the pearls at the bottom of the seas; and all germs, O goddess! are quickened in the profound obscurity of thy humidity! When thou comest forth a calm spreadeth over the earth; the flowers close; the waves are lulled; wearied men sleep with their faces upturned toward thee; and the entire earth, with its oceans and its mountains, is reflected in thy face, as in a mirror. Thou art white, sweet, lustrous, gentle, immaculate, purifying, serene!”

The crescent moon was just then over the Hot-Springs Mountain; below it in the notch of the two summits on the opposite side of the gulf, appeared a little star, encircled by a pale light. Salammbô continued:

“But thou art a terrible mistress! . . . Likewise produced

by thee are monsters, frightful phantoms, and awful dreams; thine eyes devour the stones of buildings, and during the periods of thy rejuvenescence the sacred apes fall ill. Whither goest thou then? Why dost thou continually change thy form? Sometimes narrow and curved, thou glidest through space as a mastless galley, and again, amid stars, thou resemblest a shepherd guarding his flock; anon shining and round, thou grazest the mountain peaks like a chariot wheel!

"O Tanit, dost thou not love me? I have gazed on thee so often! But, no, thou swimmest through the blue, whilst I remain on the motionless earth . . .

"Taanach, take your nebel and play softly on the silver string, for my heart is sad."

The slave lifted a sort of ebony harp, taller than herself, of a triangular shape like a delta, and placing the point in a crystal globe began to play with both hands.

Sounds followed low, precipitous tones, like the buzzing of bees, and growing more and more sonorous, were wafted into the night, and mingled with the lament of the waves and the rustling of the large trees on the summit of the Acropolis.

"Hush!" cried Salammbô.

"What is it, mistress? If a breeze but blow, or a cloud pass, thou art vexed and disturbed."

"I know not," she replied.

"You have exhausted yourself by praying too long," urged the slave.

"Oh! Taanach! I would dissolve myself in prayer like a flower in wine!"

"Perhaps it is the scent of thy perfumes?"

"No!" said Salammbô. "The spirit of the gods dwells in sweet odours."

Then the slave talked to her of her father. It was believed that he had gone into the Amber country beyond the pillars of Melkarth.

"But, mistress, if he should not return," she said, "you must choose, as was his will, a husband from among the sons of the

Elders; and your unrest will vanish in the embrace of your husband."

"Why?" asked the young girl. All the sons of the Elders she had ever seen horrified her with their wild beast laughter, and their coarse limbs.

"Taanach, sometimes a feeling emanates from the innermost depths of my being, like hot flushes, heavier than the vapours arising from a volcano—voices call to me; a fiery globe rises up in my breast; it suffocates me. I seem to be about to die, when something sweet flows from my brow, extending to my very feet—thrills through every atom of my being—it is a caress which envelops me—I feel myself crushed as if a god spread himself over and upon me. Oh! I long to lose myself in the night mists—in the ripples of the fountains, in the sap of the trees, to leave my body, to be but a breath of air—a ray of light, and glide through space unto thee, O Mother!"

She raised her arms to their full height, bending her body backward, pale and delicate in her white robe, as the moon; then in her ecstasy she fell panting on her ivory couch. Taanach placed around her mistress's neck a collar of amber and dolphins' teeth to banish these terrors. Salammbô said, in a voice almost inaudible, "Go and bring Schahabarim here to me."

Salammbô's father had not wished that she should enter the college of priestesses, nor even that she should know aught concerning the popular Tanit. He intended her for some alliance which would serve his political aims: so that Salammbô lived alone in her palace, her mother having been dead for years. She had grown up amid abstinences, fasts, and purifications, and was always surrounded by exquisite and solemn things—her body saturated with perfumes—her soul filled with prayers. She had not tasted wine, or eaten meat, or touched an unclean animal, or put her foot in the house of death.

She was ignorant of obscene images; for each god was manifested in many different forms, and the various rites, often most contradictory, all demonstrated the same principles; and Salammbô had been taught to adore the goddess in her sidereal representation. An influence had descended from the moon



“NEVER! YOUR DESIRE IS SACRILEGE”

upon this maiden, for whenever the planet waned Salammô became feeble, languishing all day, only reviving at night; during an eclipse she had nearly died.

But the jealous Rabetna revenged herself on this chaste maiden, withheld from immolation; obsessing her with allurements all the stronger because they were vague, the outgrowth of faith, strengthened by imagination.

The daughter of Hamilcar was constantly preoccupied with Tanit. She had learned the goddess's adventures, her journeys, and all her names, which she repeated, without their having any distinct significance for her. In order to penetrate the profundities of her dogma, she longed to view, in the most secret places of the temple, the ancient idol, with the magnificent cloak, wherein rested the destiny of Carthage. The idea of a deity was not clearly divorced from her representation, and to possess or even behold her image was to share a part of her power, and in some measure to dominate her.

Salammô turned as she recognised the tinkling of the gold bells that Schahabarim wore at the hem of his robe.

He ascended the stairs, and pausing as he reached the threshold of the terrace, folded his arms. His sunken eyes burned like lamps in a sepulchre; his long, thin body glided along in its linen robe, which was weighted by bells alternating with emerald balls about his heels. His limbs were feeble, his head oblique, his chin peaked, his skin was cold to the touch, and his yellow face, covered with deeply furrowed wrinkles, seemed as if contracted in a yearning, in an eternal grief.

This man was the high priest of Tanit, and he had educated Salammô.

"Speak!" said he. "What do you wish?"

"I hoped—you almost promised me— . . ." she stammered, half fearing; then suddenly continued: "Why do you despise me? What have I neglected in the rites? You are my teacher, and you have said to me that no person is more learned than I in the mysteries of the goddess; but there are some of which you have not yet told me; is not this true, O father?"

Schahabarim, remembering the orders of Hamilcar concern-

ing his daughter's education, responded: "No! I have nothing more to teach you."

"A spirit," she resumed, "urges me to this adoration. I have climbed the steps of Eschmoûn—god of the planets and intelligences; I have slept under the golden olive tree of Melkarth—patron of all Tyrian colonies; I have opened the gates of Baal-Khamoûn—medium of light and fertilisation; I have made sacrifices to the subterranean Kabiri—to the gods of the winds, the rivers, the woods, and the mountains—but they all are too distant, too high, too insensible—you understand? But Tanit mingles in my life, she fills my soul, and I tremble with internal dartings, as if she struggled to escape the confines of my body. I feel I am about to hear her voice, behold her face; a brightness dazzles me, then I fall back again into the shadows."

Schahabarim was silent. She implored him with beseeching glances. At length he made a sign to dismiss the slave, who was not of Canaanite race. Taanach disappeared, and the priest raised one arm in the air, and began:

"Before the gods, only darkness existed, and a breath stirred, heavy and indistinct, like the consciousness of a man in a dream: it contracted itself, creating Desire and Vapour; from Desire and Vapour proceeded primitive Matter. This was a water, black, icy, profound, containing insensible monsters, incoherent parts of forms to be born, such as are painted on the walls of the sanctuaries. Then Matter condensed and became an egg. The egg broke: one half formed the earth, the other half the firmament. The sun, moon, winds, and clouds appeared, and at a crash of thunder the sentient animals awoke. Then Eschmoûn unrolled himself in the starry sphere! Khamoûn shone brilliantly in the sun; Melkarth with his arms pushed him beyond Gades; the Kabiri descended into the volcanoes; and Rabetna, like a nurse, leaned over the world, pouring forth her light like milk, and her night like a mantle."

"And then?" she inquired.

The priest had related the secrets of origins, to distract her

by the loftiest thoughts; but the maiden's desire was rekindled by his last words, and Schahabarim, half yielding, continued:

"She inspires and governs the loves of men."

"The loves of men!" repeated Salammbô, dreamily.

"She is the soul of Carthage," continued the priest. "Although her influence reaches over all, it is here she dwells, beneath the Sacred Veil."

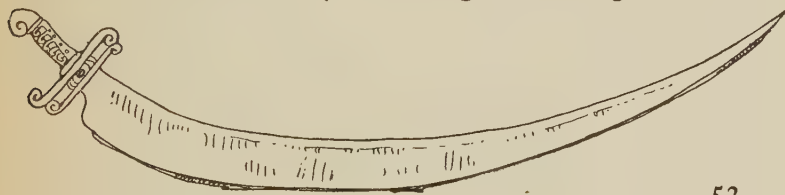
"O father!" exclaimed Salammbô, "I shall see her, shall I not? You will take me to her? For a long time I have hesitated: now the desire to see her form devours me. Pity me; comfort me! Let us go to the temple!"

He repulsed her by a vehement gesture, full of pride.

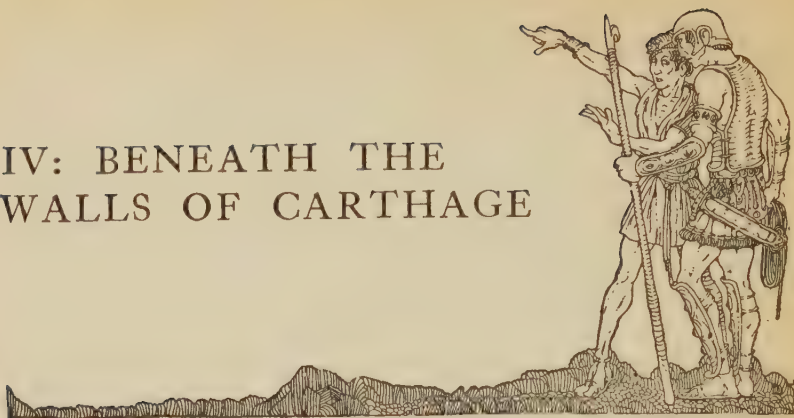
"Never! Do you not know that to look upon her is death? The hermaphrodite Baals unveil only to us; men that we are in comprehension and women in weakness. Your desire is sacrilege. Be satisfied with the knowledge that is already yours."

She fell upon her knees, placing two fingers against her ears in sign of repentance; sobbing, crushed by the priest's words, at the same time indignant with him—filled equally with fear and humiliation. Schahabarim remained standing, remained unmoved. He looked down upon her quivering at his feet, and it afforded him a measure of delight to see her thus suffering for his divinity whom he, himself, could wholly embrace. Already the birds sang, and a cold wind blew, and little clouds fluttered across the pale sky.

Suddenly the priest perceived on the horizon behind Tunis what at first appeared to be a light mist floating over the ground; then it formed a vast curtain of grey dust spreading perpendicularly, and through the whirling mass the heads of dromedaries and the flash of lances and bucklers could be seen. It was the Barbarian army advancing on Carthage.



IV: BENEATH THE WALLS OF CARTHAGE



MOUNTED on asses or running on foot, pale, breathless, frantic with terror, the people from the surrounding country came flocking into the city. They were flying before the army. In three days it had accomplished the journey from Sicca, bent on destroying Carthage.

The gates were closed. Almost immediately the Barbarians appeared; but they halted in the middle of the isthmus on the lake shore. At first they gave no hostile sign. Some approached with palms in their hands, only to be driven back by the arrows of the Carthaginians, so intense was their terror.

During the morning and at nightfall stragglers prowled along the walls. A small man, carefully wrapped in a mantle, with his face concealed under a low visor, was specially noticeable. He lingered for hours gazing at the aqueduct, and with such concentration that he undoubtedly hoped to mislead the Carthaginians as to his actual designs. He was accompanied by another man, of giant-like stature, who was bareheaded.

But Carthage was protected along the entire width of the isthmus: first by a moat, then by a rampart of turf; finally by a double-storied wall, thirty cubits high, built of hewn stones. It contained stables for three hundred elephants, with accommo-

dation for their caparisons, shackles, and provisions; other stables for four thousand horses with their harness and fodder; also barracks for twenty thousand soldiers, arsenals for their armour, and all the materials and necessities of war. On the second story were towers, with battlements, provided on the outside with bronze bucklers suspended from camp irons.

The first line of walls sheltered Malqua, the quarter inhabited by seafaring people and dyers. Masts were to be seen on which purple sails were drying, and beyond, on the last terraces, clay furnaces for cooking saumure.

Behind, the city was laid out in tiers, like an amphitheatre; its high cube-shaped dwellings were severally built of stones, planks, shingles, reeds, shells, and pressed earth. The groves of the temples were like lakes of verdure in this mountain of diversely coloured blocks. The public squares levelled it at unequal distances, and innumerable streets intercrossed from top to bottom. The boundaries of the three old quarters, now intermingled, could be distinguished, and they rose up like huge rocks or spread out in enormous flat spaces of walls—half covered with flowers, and blackened by wide streaks where refuse had been thrown over them. Streets passed through the yawning spaces like streams beneath bridges.

The hill of the Acropolis, in the centre of Byrsa, was hidden under a confusion of monuments—there were temples with torsel-columns, bearing bronze capitals and metal chains, cones of uncemented stones banded with azure, copper cupolas, marble architraves, Babylonian buttresses, and obelisks balanced on their points like inverted torches. Peristyles reached to frontons, volutes appeared between colonnades; granite walls supported tile partitions. All these mounted one above another, half hidden, in a marvellous, incomprehensible fashion. Here one witnessed the succession of ages, and the memories of forgotten countries were awakened.

Behind the Acropolis, in the red earth, the Mappalian road, bordered by tombs, stretched in a straight line from the shore to the catacombs; then came large dwellings in spacious gardens; and the third quarter, Megara, the new city, extended

to the edge of the cliffs, on which was a gigantic lighthouse, where nightly blazed a beacon.

Carthage thus displayed herself before the soldiers now encamped on the plains.

They could recognise the markets and the crossroads, and disputed among themselves as to the sites of the various temples. Khamoûn faced the Syssites, and had golden tiles; Melkarth, to the left of Eschmoûn, bore coral branches on its roof; Tanit, beyond, uplifted its copper cupola among the palm-trees; and the black Moloch stood below the cisterns beside the lighthouse. At the angles of the frontons, on the summit of the walls, at the corners of the squares everywhere, were various divinities with their hideous heads, colossal or dwarfish, with enormous or with immeasurably flattened bellies, open jaws, and outspread arms, holding in their hands pitchforks, chains, or swords. And the blue sea reached away at the foot of the streets that perspective made seem even steeper than they were. From morning until night, these streets were filled by a tumultuous crowd: young boys ringing bells cried out before the doors of the bath-houses; shops wherein hot drinks were sold smoked; the air resounded with the clang of anvils; the white cocks, consecrated to the sun, crowed on the terraces; oxen awaiting slaughter bellowed in the temples; slaves ran hither and thither bearing baskets on their heads; and in the depth of the porticoes now and again a priest appeared, clothed in sombre mantle, bare-footed, wearing a conical cap.

This spectacle of Carthage enraged the Barbarians. They admired her; they execrated her; they desired both to inhabit her and annihilate her. But what might there not be in the military harbor, defended by a triple wall? Then again, behind the city, at the back of Megara, higher even than the Acropolis, loomed up Hamilcar's palace.

Mâtho's eyes constantly turned in that direction. He climbed into the olive-trees, and leaned forward, shading his eyes with his hand; but the gardens were deserted, and the red door with the black cross remained closed.

More than a score of times he made the circuit of the ram-

parts, searching for some breach by which to enter. One night he threw himself into the gulf, and swam for three hours. He ultimately reached the foot of Mappals, tried to cling to and climb up the cliffs, but cruelly tore his knees and crushed his nails, so he fell back into the water and returned defeated.

His impotence exasperated him: he was jealous of this Carthage that held Salammbô, as of a man who might have possessed her. Maddened by these thoughts, all enervation left him: thenceforth he plunged continuously into a frenzy of reckless deeds. With his cheeks blazing, his eyes afire, and his voice rasping, he strode at a rapid pace across the camp, or sat on the shore rubbing his large sword with sand. He shot arrows at the passing vultures. His heart overflowed in furious speech.

"Let your wrath course freely like a runaway chariot," said Spendius. "Shout; blaspheme, ravage and kill; sorrow allays itself with blood, and since you cannot satiate your love, gorge your hate; it will sustain you!"

Mâtho resumed command of his soldiers, drilling them unmercifully. They respected him for his courage, and especially for his strength; besides, he inspired in their hearts a mystic fear, for they believed that he communed at night with phantoms.

The other captains were stirred by his example. Soon the army was disciplined. From their dwellings the Carthaginians could hear the constant sound of trumpet calls, regulating the military exercises. At length the Barbarians advanced.

In order to crush them in the isthmus, the Carthaginians would have required two armies to attack them in the rear simultaneously: the one debarking at the end of the Gulf of Utica, and the other at the Hot Springs Mountain. But what could the Carthaginians do now, with only the Sacred Legion, consisting at most of but six thousand men? If the Barbarians diverged toward the east they would join the Nomads, intercepting the road to Cyrene, and thus the commerce of the desert. If they fell back to the west the Numidians would revolt. Finally, lack of food would force them, sooner or later, like locusts to devastate the surrounding country; the wealthy trem-

bled for their beautiful palaces, for their vineyards, and for their farms.

Hanno proposed the most atrocious and impracticable measures, such as promising a large sum of money for every Barbarian's head; or suggesting that the enemy's camp be fired with vessels and war-engines. His colleague Gisco, on the contrary, advised that the Mercenaries should be paid. The Elders detested him on account of his popularity, as they dreaded to incur the risk of a master, and from terror of a monarchy strove to weaken whatever could tend to reestablish such a form of government.

Outside the fortifications were people of another race and of unknown origin, all porcupine hunters, eaters of molluscs and serpents—people who penetrated the caverns, captured live hyænas, and found amusement in chasing them during the evenings on the sands of Megara between the stelas of the tombs. Their cabins made of wrack and mud hung against the cliffs like swallows' nests; they lived without government, without gods, pell-mell, completely naked, and at once both feeble and savage—during all ages cursed by the Carthaginians because of their unclean food. One morning the sentinels perceived that they had all gone.

At length the members of the Grand Council determined that they would go personally to the Barbarians' camp, without collars or girdles, and with their sandals uncovered, like friendly neighbours. Accordingly one day they advanced with a tranquil step, throwing salutations to the captains, or even stopping to talk with the soldiers, saying that all war was now at an end, and they were prepared to do justice to the demands of the Mercenaries.

Many of these patricians saw for the first time a Mercenary camp. Instead of finding the confusion that they had imagined, order ruled, and a frightful stillness was over everything. A rampart of turf enclosed the army within a high wall invincible to the shocks of catapults. The camp streets were kept sprinkled with fresh water. Through holes in the tents they saw lurid eyes gleaming mid the shadows. The stacks of

spears and the suspended panoplies dazzled them like mirrors. They talked in undertones, and seemed constantly afraid that their long robes would overturn some object or another.

The soldiers asked for provisions, agreeing to pay for them out of the money that the Republic owed them. Oxen, sheep, guinea-fowls, dried fruits, lupins, as well as smoked mackerel—those excellent mackerel which Carthage exported with large revenue to all other ports—were sent to them. But the soldiers disdainfully walked around the magnificent cattle, disparaging that which they coveted, offering for a sheep the price of a pigeon, for three goats the value of a pomegranate. The eaters of unclean things presented themselves as arbitrators, affirming that they were being duped. Then they drew their swords and threatened to slay the ambassadors.

The commissioners of the Grand Council wrote down the number of years' pay due to each soldier; but it was now impossible to know how much the Mercenaries had originally been engaged for, and the Elders were frightened at the immense sums they would be obliged to pay. It would necessitate the sale of the silphium reserve, and compel them to impose a tax on the trading cities. The Mercenaries would be impatient; already Tunis sympathised with them.

The rich, stunned by Hanno's fury and by the reproaches of his colleague Gisco, urged the citizens who knew any of the Barbarians to visit them immediately, in order to regain their friendship; such confidence would calm them.

Tradesmen, scribes, workers from the arsenals, and entire families visited the Barbarians. The soldiers permitted all the Carthaginians to enter, but by a single passage, so narrow that four men abreast elbowed each other.

Spendius stood against the barrier, and saw to it that everyone was carefully searched. Mâtho faced him, examining the passers, seeking to find someone whom he might have seen at the palace of Salammbô.

The encampment resembled a town, it was so crowded and so active. Yet the two distinct crowds, military and civic, mingled without being confounded; the one dressed in linen or

wool, wearing felt-caps pointed like pine-cones, and the other vested in iron, wearing metal helmets. Amid serving men and vendors strolled about women of all nationalities; brown as ripe dates, green as olives, yellow as oranges. These women had been sold by sailors, or stolen from dens and caravans, or taken during the sacking of cities, that they might be wearied with lust while they were young, or be overwhelmed with blows when they were old, and die neglected on the roadside during some retreat, amid the baggage, along with the abandoned beasts of burden.

The wives of the Nomads dangled over their heels their square-cut, tawny-coloured robes of dromedaries' hair. The Cyrenaic musicians, with painted eyebrows, and wrapped in violet gauze, sang as they squatted on mats; old Negresses, with their hanging breasts, picked up sun-dried dung for fuel. Syracusians wore golden plates in their hair; Lusitanians were adorned with necklaces made of shells; the Gallic women wore wolves' skins over their white breasts; and sturdy children, covered with vermin, naked, uncircumcised, butted the passers-by with their lusty heads, or crept up behind them, like young tigers, to bite their hands.

The Carthaginians walked through the camp, amazed at its teeming life. The most miserable were melancholy, while the others strove to dissimulate their anxiety.

Soldiers slapped them familiarly on their shoulders, exhorting them to be gay; and as soon as they perceived some person of note, invited him to join their games; if one perchance consented to play a game of discs, then the soldiers managed to crush his feet; or in boxing, after the first pass, broke his jaw.

The slingers terrified the Carthaginians with their slings, the snake-charmers with their vipers, and the cavalry with their horses. These citizens, used to peaceful occupations, bent their heads and forced a smile at all the outrageous doings. Some, assuming bravery, even signified that they desired to become soldiers. They were set to cleave wood and to curry mules; or they were buckled in armour, and rolled about like casks through the camp streets. Afterwards, when they wanted to

take leave, the Barbarians pulled out their own hair, and with grotesque contortions demonstrated their pretended grief.

Many of the Mercenaries, from foolishness or prejudice, really believed that all Carthaginians were very rich; they followed their visitors, begging; they asked for all that they wore that seemed beautiful in their barbaric eyes—a ring, a girdle, sandals, or the fringes off their robes; after the Carthaginians were utterly despoiled and said, “But we have nothing left; what do you want?” they would answer, “Your women! your lives!”

In due time the military accounts were turned over to the captains, read to the soldiers, and definitely approved. Then the soldiers demanded the tents, which were given to them—the Greek polemarchs demanded some of the beautiful suits of armour made in Carthage; the Grand Council voted a sum of money for this purpose. Then the cavalry-men insisted that it would be but fair for the Republic to indemnify them for their horses; one affirmed that he had lost three in such and such a siege, and another five on a certain march, another fourteen among the cliffs. They were proffered the fine stallions of Hecatompylus; but no, they preferred money.

Finally they demanded their pay in silver, not with leather tokens, all the grain due to them, and that at the highest prices it had brought during the war, so that they asked for one measure of meal, four hundred times more than had actually been given for a sack of wheat. This injustice and greed exasperated the Council; nevertheless, they had to yield.

Then the delegates of the soldiers and the Council were reconciled, swearing renewed amity by the genius of Carthage and by the gods of the Barbarians. With demonstrations and Oriental verbosity they exchanged apologies and caresses. The soldiers now demanded as a proof of friendship the punishment of the traitors who had estranged them from the Republic.

The Carthaginians pretended not to understand; the Barbarians, explaining more clearly, boldly declared that they must have Hanno's head. Frequently during the day they would leave their camp and walking along the foot of the

walls cry out for someone to throw the Suffete's head down to them, at the same time holding their robes outstretched to receive it.

Perhaps the Grand Council might have yielded, had not a last exaction, more outrageous than all others, followed, for now the Mercenaries demanded as brides for their chiefs maidens to be chosen from the noble families. This idea had been suggested by Spendius, and many thought that it could be easily accomplished. However, their audacious presumption in wanting to mix with the Punic blood filled the citizens with such indignation that they brusquely told them they had nothing more to expect or receive from Carthage. Then the soldiers exclaimed that they had been basely deceived, and that if within three days they did not receive their pay they would go themselves and take it in Carthage.

The bad faith of the Mercenaries was not quite so complete as their enemies supposed, for Hamilcar had made them extravagant promises—vague, it is true, but solemn, and oft repeated. They had been led to believe that, when they landed at Carthage, the city would forthwith be given up to them, and that they should share among themselves the city treasure; hence, when they came, only to find their payments were repudiated, or would be paid with great difficulty and delay, the disillusion of their pride, as well as the rebuff to their cupidity, was severe.

Had not Dionysius, Pyrrhus, Agathocles, and the generals of Alexander, furnished examples of marvellous fortunes? The ideal of Hercules, whom the Canaanites confounded with the sun, illumined the horizon of the armies. They knew that soldiers from the ranks had worn diadems, and the reëchoing fame of falling empires made the Gauls dream of glory in their oak forests, and inspired with ambition the Ethiopians on their native sands. But here was a nation ever ready to utilise the courageous; and the thief driven from his tribe, the paricide skulking on the highways, the sacrilegious pursued by the gods, all the starving, and all desperadoes endeavoured to reach the port where the agents of Carthage recruited soldiers. Usually the Republic kept its promises; however, in this case

the strength of its avarice had dragged it into a perilous infamy. The Numidians, the Libyans, the whole of Africa, would now be ready to throw themselves upon Carthage. The sea alone remained open to it. There it would come into collision with Rome: so, like a man assailed by murderers, it felt death lurking all around.

It seemed that Gisco was again the only hope; the Barbarians would probably look favorably on his intervention. One morning the chains of the port were lowered, and three flat boats passed through the canal of the Tænia and entered the lake.

At the prow of the first boat Gisco could be seen; behind him, higher than a catafalque, loomed an enormous chest, ornamented with rings like pendent wreaths. Following, appeared the legion of interpreters coiffured like sphinxes, with parrots tattooed on their breasts. Friends and slaves followed, all unarmed and in such a throng that they touched shoulder to shoulder. These three long, crowded boats solemnly advanced amid the cheers of the expectant army watching them from the shore.

As soon as Gisco landed, the soldiers rushed to meet him. He soon erected, with sacks piled on top of each other, a kind of tribunal, and declared that he would not leave the place until he had paid them all in full.

There was an outburst of applause which prevented his speaking for some time. Then he censured the wrongdoing of the Republic and the wrongdoing of the Barbarians; the great fault had been with those few who had mutinied, with such extreme violence as to have alarmed Carthage. The best proof of the Republic's present good intentions was the fact that it had sent him—the eternal adversary of Hanno—to treat with them. They must not suppose that the people would be so foolish as to anger brave men, or so ungrateful as to discount their services. Gisco prepared to pay the soldiers, beginning with the Libyans. As they declared the lists incorrect, he set them aside.

They defiled before him by nations, and raised their fingers to indicate the term of years they had served. Each man suc-

cessively was marked on his left arm with green paint; scribes drew out the money from open coffers while others kept the record by punching holes in sheets of lead.

Presently a man passed tramping heavily, like an ox.

"Come nearer," said Gisco, suspecting some fraud. "How many years have you served?"

"Twelve," responded the Libyan.

Gisco slipped his fingers under the fellow's chin, as the chin-piece of the helmets produced, after being worn for a long time, two callous spots that were called *carroubes*, and "having *carroubes*" was synonymous to being a veteran.

"Thief!"—exclaimed Gisco. "That which is missing on your face should be on your shoulders!" At this he tore off the man's tunic, disclosing a back covered with bleeding sores. In truth he was a slave labourer of Hippo-Zarytus. Yells arose, and the culprit was beheaded.

When night fell, Spendius went and roused up the Libyans, saying to them:

"When the Ligurians, the Greeks, Balearics, and all the men of Italy are paid, they will return home. But you must remain in Africa; scattered in tribes without any means of defence! Then the Republic will revenge itself! Beware of the journey! Are you going to believe everything they tell you? The two Suffetes are in accord! This one is abusing your confidence! Do you recollect the Island of Bones, and Xanthippus, whom they sent back to Sparta on a rotten galley?"

"What are we to do?" they asked.

"Think it over," replied Spendius.

The two next days were spent in paying the people of Magdala, Leptis and Hecatompylus. Spendius spread fresh dissension among the Gauls, saying:

"They are paying the Libyans, afterward they will discharge the Greeks, then the Balearics, then the Asiatics, and all the others! But you, who are but a small number, will receive nothing! You will never see your country again! You have no ships! They will kill you to save the expense of your keep!"

The Gauls set out to find Gisco. Autharitus, the man whom

he had wounded in Hamilcar's gardens, tried to speak with him, but was repulsed by the slaves, and disappeared, swearing revenge.

Demands and complaints multiplied. The most persistent entered the Suffete's tent at night, and, to move him to pity, they would take his fingers and make him feel their toothless mouths, their emaciated arms, and their scars. Those who were not yet paid became exasperated; those who had received their pay demanded an additional sum for their horses; and vagabonds and outcasts assumed soldiers' arms and declared that they had been forgotten. Every moment men surged forward in eddies; the tents cracked under the strain, and finally toppled over; the multitude, giving vent to yells, crowded between the ramparts, swaying and surging from the entrance to the centre of the camp. When the tumult became excessive, Gisco rested one elbow on his ivory sceptre, and gazed motionless over the sea of faces, with his fingers buried in his beard.

Mâtho often went aside to talk with Spendius, but ever took his place again facing the Suffete; and Gisco could perpetually feel his eyes like flaming lances darting toward him. Frequently they exchanged words of abuse, above the heads of the crowd, but neither understood the other. Meanwhile, the distribution continued, and the Suffete found a way around all obstacles.

The Greeks quibbled about the differences in the currency; but he furnished such satisfactory explanations that they withdrew without a murmur. The Negroes demanded their pay in the white shells used in trading through the interior of Africa; he offered to send there and bring a supply to Carthage; then, like the others, they accepted the silver money. The Balearians had been promised something better—women. The Suffete informed them that an entire caravan of virgins was expected for them; but the road was long, and it would require six moons more. However, when they arrived at their destination, they would be fat, and well rubbed with benzoin, and they would be sent on vessels to the Balearic ports.

Suddenly Zaxas, now fine and vigorous, leaped like a mountebank upon the shoulders of his friends, and cried out,

“What have you reserved for the dead?” pointing to the gate of Khamoûn.

Under the last rays of the sun the brass plates that decorated the gate from top to bottom were refulgent, and the Barbarians believed that they saw on them a track of blood. Every time Gisco tried to speak, their yells began again; finally he descended with slow steps, and shut himself up in his tent.

At sunrise, when he went forth again, his interpreters, who slept outside his tent, did not stir. They lay on their backs, eyes fixed, tongues protruding between their teeth, and their faces bluish; white froth oozed from their nostrils, their limbs were stiff, as if they had been frozen during the night, and around the neck of each was drawn a noose of rushes.

From this point the rebellion moved rapidly. The murder of the Balearians recalled by Zarxas added fuel to the suspicions set brewing by Spendius. They imagined that the Republic was still seeking to deceive them. It must be ended! They could do without interpreters! Zarxas, with a sling around his head, sang war songs; Autharitus brandished his great sword; Spendius would whisper something to one, and to another give a sword. The most powerful endeavoured to pay themselves; but those less enraged requested that the distribution continue.

During this excitement none laid down his weapons, and the wrath of all centred upon Gisco in a tumultuous hatred. Some went over to his side. So long as they only vociferated their wrongs, they were patiently listened to; but the moment they uttered the slightest word in his favour they were immediately stoned, or their heads were cut off by a blow from behind. The heap of sacks soon became red as an altar during sacrifice.

They became terrible after eating, when they had drunk wine! This was an indulgence forbidden under pain of death in the Punic armies; but in derision of her discipline they raised their cups toward Carthage. Afterward they turned on the slaves of the exchequer and began killing them. The word *strike*, different in each language, was understood by all.

Gisco knew that his country had forsaken him, but he would not dishonour it. When the soldiers recalled to him that the

Government had promised them ships, he swore by Moloch to furnish them himself at his own expense, and pulling off his necklace of blue stones threw it to the crowd as a pledge of his faith.

Then the Africans claimed their grain, according to the arrangement with the Grand Council. Gisco spread out the accounts of the Syssites, traced with violet paint on sheep-skins, and read all that had entered into Carthage, day by day, month by month.

Suddenly he paused; his eyes opened wide, as if he had discovered between the figures his own death sentence. In truth, the Elders had made fraudulent reductions, and the grain sold during the most calamitous period of the war was rated so low in these accounts that only the blindest person could have been deceived.

"Speak!" cried they; "louder! Oh! he is trying to lie, the coward! Look out!"

He hesitated for some time; at length he again took up his task.

The soldiers, without suspecting the accounts rendered by the Syssites to be inaccurate, accepted them. The abundance that they found in Carthage threw them into jealous fury. They broke open the sycamore coffer; it was now three-quarters empty, but having seen such enormous sums taken from it, they had fancied it inexhaustible. Had Gisco hidden some in his tent? The soldiers climbed over the sacks, led on by Mâtho, yelling:

"The money! the money!"

Gisco at last responded:

"Let your general give it to you!"

Without speaking further, he looked at them with his large yellow eyes and long pale face, whiter than his beard. An arrow whistled toward him, and was arrested by its feathered barb, holding fast by his broad gold earrings; a thread of blood trickled down from his tiara upon his shoulder.

At a gesture from Mâtho all advanced upon Gisco. He held out his arms; Spendius with a running knot fastened his wrists

together; some one pitched him over, and he disappeared in the prevailing disorder of the crowd, which was tumbling over the sacks. They completely ransacked his tent, finding nothing but the necessities of life; and on further search, three images of Tanit, and in a monkey's hide, a black stone, said to have fallen from the moon.

The numerous Carthaginians who had accompanied Gisco were all of the war party, and were men of importance. They were taken outside of the tents, and thrown into the pit for filth. They were attached by chains to stakes driven in the earth, and their food was held out to them on the points of javelins.

Over all of these captives Autharitus kept surveillance, heaping invectives upon them; but as they did not comprehend his language, they made no response, and the Gaul would, from time to time, throw stones in their faces, to make them cry out.

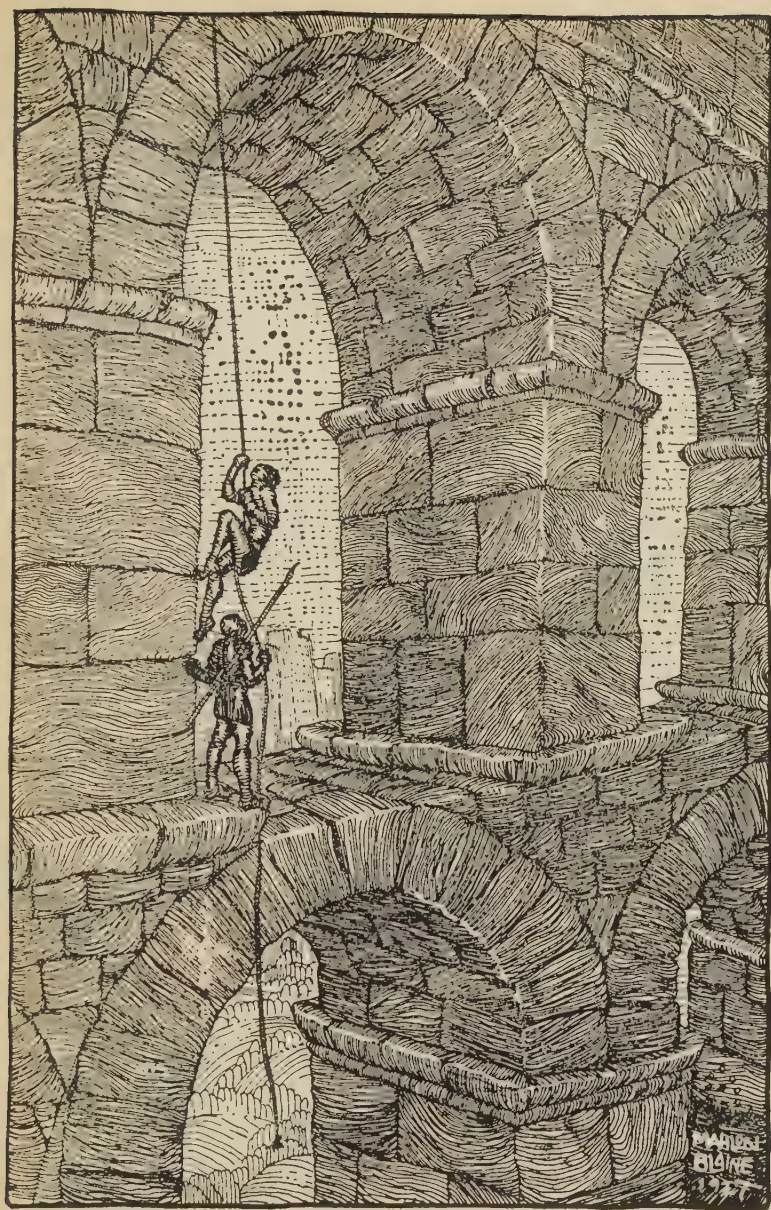
The next day a languor possessed the army. As their rage subsided they became anxious. Mâtho suffered from a strange melancholy. It seemed to him that he had indirectly insulted Salammbô: these rich men seemed dependents of her person. He sat at night on the edge of their pit, and in their moans fancied he heard something akin to the voices of which his heart was full.

Meanwhile, all reproached the Libyans, who alone were paid. But though national antipathies and personal hatreds were reviving, everyone felt the present danger of yielding to them. Reprisals after such an outrage would be formidable. They must anticipate the vengeance of Carthage. Conferences and harangues were continuous; everyone talked; no one was listened to; and Spendius, ordinarily so fluent, now shook his head at all proposals.

One evening he carelessly asked Mâtho if there were any springs in the interior of the city.

"Not one!" responded Mâtho.

The next day Spendius led him to the lake shore, "Master, if your heart is brave, I will conduct you to Carthage."



THEY CLIMBED UP

"How?" breathlessly asked Mâtho.

"Swear to execute my orders, and to follow me like a shadow," said Spendius.

Mâtho raised his arm toward the planet Cabira, saying:

"By Tanit I swear it!"

Spendius continued:

"To-morrow, after sunset, await me at the foot of the aqueduct between the ninth and tenth arcades. Bring with you an iron pike, a crestless helmet, and leathern sandals."

The aqueduct to which he referred ran obliquely across the entire isthmus—a work much enlarged later by the Romans. Notwithstanding the disdain of Carthage for other peoples, she had awkwardly borrowed this new invention from Rome; even as Rome herself had imitated the Punic galleys. It was of a broad low architecture of five tiers of superposed arches, with buttresses at the base and lions' heads at the summit, which abutted on the western side of the Acropolis, where it plunged under the city, pouring almost a river into the cisterns of Megara.

At the hour agreed upon, Spendius found Mâtho waiting. He fastened a sort of harpoon to the end of a long rope, and whirled it rapidly like a sling; as the iron caught in the masonry, they climbed up along the wall, one following the other. After reaching the first story, each time that the harpoon was thrown it fell back; so they were compelled to walk along the edge of the cornice in an attempt to find a crevice. On each row of arches it became narrower. At times the rope slackened, and again it threatened to break. At length they reached the upper platform. From time to time Spendius leaned over to tap the stones with his hand.

"Here we are," said he, "we will begin!" and pressing on the pike Mâtho had brought, he loosened one of the slabs.

Far off they caught sight of a troop of cavalry galloping, without bridles on their horses. Their gold bracelets bounced along the loose draperies of their ample mantles. In advance could be distinguished a man crowned with ostrich-plumes, holding a lance in each hand as he galloped.

“Narr’ Havas!” exclaimed Mâtho.

“What matter?” replied Spendius, leaping into the hole he had just made by displacing a stone. Mâtho, by his orders, tried to prize out one of the blocks, but lack of space kept him from moving his elbows.

“We shall return,” said Spendius. “Go first.”

Then they ventured into the water channel. It reached up to their waists; soon they staggered, and were obliged to swim. Their limbs knocked against the inner walls of the narrow duct and as they progressed, the water gradually rose till it almost reached the upper stone-work, against which they scratched their faces as the swift current carried them along. An air heavy as that of a sepulchre pressed upon their lungs, and with their heads under their arms, their knees together, elongating themselves as much as possible, they passed like arrows through the stifling darkness, choking and nearly dead. Suddenly all was black before them—the speed of the water doubled. They sank. When they rose to the surface again they remained for some minutes floating on their backs, inhaling the delicious pure air. Arcades one behind another opened out amid wide walls separating the basins; all were full, and the water continued as one unbroken sheet the length of the cisterns. Through the air-holes in the cupola of the ceiling, a pale brightness spread over the water like discs of light; the darkness thickened toward the walls as they retreated to an indefinite extent—here the slightest noise made a tremendous echo.

Spendius and Mâtho began swimming again, and passing the openings of the arches, crossed numerous chambers in succession: two similar but much smaller rows of basins extended parallel on each side. They lost themselves, and were compelled to turn and swim back for some distance. Something offered a footing under their feet: it was the pavement of the gallery running the length of the cistern. With great caution they proceeded to feel the walls, striving to detect an opening; but their feet slipped, and they fell into the deep basin; they struggled up, but again fell back. As they struck out once more they experienced a frightful fatigue in swimming—their limbs

seemed about to dissolve in the water—their eyes closed—they seemed in a death agony.

Spendius struck his hand against the bar of a grating; both men shook it vigorously; it yielded, and they found themselves on the steps of a stairway closed at the top by a bronze door. With the point of a dagger they wrested free the bolt, which was opened from the outside, and at once gained access to pure, fresh air.

The night was full of silence, and the sky seemed an immeasurable height; clumps of trees projected beyond the long lines of walls; the entire city was sleeping; and the fires of the advance posts shone through the night like lost stars.

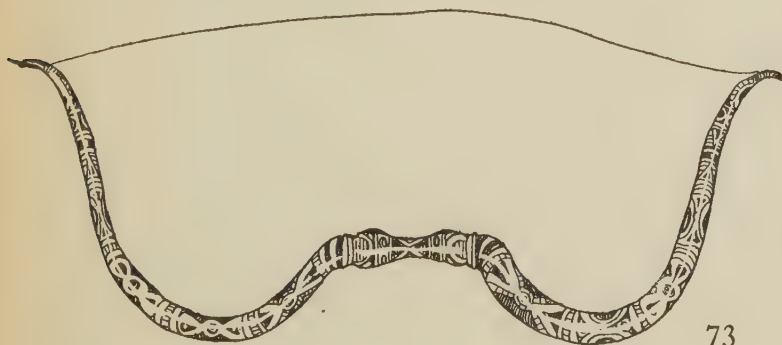
Spendius, who had spent three years confined in the *ergastulum*, knew the city but imperfectly. Mâtho, however, conjectured that in order to reach Hamilcar's palace they must go to the left and cross the Mappalian section.

"No!" said Spendius; "take me to the temple of Tanit."

Mâtho tried to speak.

"Remember!" said the former slave, as he lifted his right arm, and pointed to the resplendent planet of Cabira.

Mâtho silently turned toward the Acropolis. They crept cautiously along the enclosures of cactus bordering the pathways. The water trickled from their limbs upon the dust; their wet sandals were soundless. Spendius, with eyes gleaming brighter than torches, peered into the bushes at every step. He groped his way behind Mâtho, constantly clutching in readiness for immediate action the two daggers he wore attached to his arms by a leather band below the armpits.



V: T A N I T !



WHEN they left the gardens, they found themselves confronted by the ramparts of Megara. In a little while, however, they discovered a breach in the wall, through which they passed.

The ground descended, forming a broad valley. They came to an open space.

"Listen," said Spendius; "and above all, fear nothing: I will fulfil my promise;" and with an air of reflection he paused, as if to measure his words. "You remember, just at sunrise, when we stood on the terrace of Salammbô's palace, and I pointed out Carthage to you? We were strong that day, but you would not listen to me." Then in a graver voice he pursued: "Master, there is in the sanctuary of Tanit a mysterious veil, fallen from Heaven, that covers the goddess."

"I know that," replied Mâtho.

Spendius resumed: "It is divine, because it is a part of Tanit. . . . The gods reside where their images dwell. It is because Carthage possesses it that Carthage is great." Then leaning forward he whispered, "I have brought you with me to steal away this veil!"

Mâtho recoiled with horror. "Go! get someone else! I will not aid in such an abominable crime."

"But Tanit is your enemy," said Spendius. "She persecutes you, and is destroying you with her anger. You can thus revenge yourself. She will obey you. You will become almost immortal and invincible!"

Mâtho bowed his head low at this suggestion, and Spendius continued: "If we succumb, the army will become self-annihilated. We have neither escape, succour, nor pardon to hope for! What punishment of the gods can you dread when once you possess, in your own person, their strength? Do you prefer to perish miserably in the night of a defeat beneath the shelter of a bush, or to be burned at the stake amid the outrages heaped upon you by the populace? Master, some day you will enter Carthage between the colleges of pontiffs, who will kiss your sandals; and if the veil of Tanit then weighs upon you, reëstablish it in her temple. Follow me! Come, take it!"

A terrible longing consumed Mâtho: he would have liked to abstain from the sacrilege, and yet desired to possess the veil. He thought to himself that perhaps he did not desire to take it merely to monopolise its virtues. However, he did not probe his intentions too deeply, but paused at the limit where his thoughts frightened him.

"Let us go!" he said; and side by side they moved forward with rapid strides without speaking.

The ground ascended, and the habitations were closer together; they turned aside amid the darkness in the narrow streets. The grass hangings closing the doorways flapped against the walls. In a square camels were chewing placidly at heaps of cut grass. Then they passed beneath a leaf-covered gallery, where a pack of dogs barked at them. The space suddenly grew wider, and they recognised the western façade of the Acropolis. At the foot of Brysa extended a long, black mass; it was the temple of Tanit, a collection of monuments and gardens, courts and forecourts, hemmed in by a low wall of loose stones, over which Spendius and Mâtho vaulted.

This first enclosure surrounded a grove of plane-trees, planted as a precaution against the pest and infections of the air. Here and there were scattered tents in which, during the

day, were sold depilatory pastes, perfumes, clothing, crescent-shaped cakes, images of the goddess, and models of the temple carved in blocks of alabaster.

They had now nothing to fear, as, on the nights that the planet did not appear, all rites were suspended; still Mâtho slackened his pace; he stopped before the three ebony steps leading to the second enclosure.

"Go on!" urged Spendius.

Pomegranates, almonds, cypresses, and myrtles, alternated regularly, and were as motionless as bronze foliage; the path, paved with blue stones, crackled under their feet; and roses in full bloom hung in a bower over the long alley. They came to an oval opening, protected by a grating. Then Mâtho, who was alarmed by the silence, said to Spendius:

"It is here that the Sweet and the Bitter Waters are mingled."

"I have seen all that," replied the former slave, "in the town of Maphug, in Syria."

By a flight of six silver steps, they entered the third enclosure. An enormous cedar occupied the centre; its lowest branches were covered with scraps of fabrics and necklaces hung there by the faithful. They went a few steps more, and the façade of the temple appeared before them.

Two long porticoes, with architraves reposing on dwarfish pillars, flanked a quadrangular tower, adorned on the platform by a crescent moon. At the angles of the porticoes, and at the four corners of the tower, were vases full of burning aromatics. Pomegranates and colocynths loaded the capitals: interlacements and lozenges alternated regularly with garlands of pearls, festooning the walls, and a hedge of silver filigree formed a wide semicircle before a brass stairway leading down from the vestibule.

At the entrance, between a stela of gold and a stela of emerald, was a stone cone; Mâtho kissed his right hand as he passed it.

The first room was very lofty; innumerable openings pierced the vaulted ceiling, through which the stars could be seen. All

around the wall reed-baskets were heaped up with beards and hair, first signs of adolescence; and in the centre of the circular apartment the body of a woman rose from a pedestal which was covered with breasts. Fat, bearded, with eyelids lowered, she appeared to be smiling; her hands crossed the lower part of her gross abdomen—polished by the kisses of her votaries.

Then they found themselves in the open air in a transverse corridor, where a small altar stood against an ivory gate, barring the passage. Beyond this the priests alone might pass—for the temple was not a place for the congregation of the people, but the particular abode of its divinity.

"The undertaking is impossible," exclaimed Mâtho. "You did not remember this; let us go back."

Spendius was carefully examining the walls. He coveted the veil: not that he reposed confidence in its virtues, for Spendius believed only in the Oracle; but he was persuaded that if the Carthaginians were deprived of the veil they would fall into great consternation.

To discover some outlet, they went round to the back. Under the turpentine trees could be seen little buildings of various shapes. Here and there appeared a stone phallus; and large stags tranquilly wandered about, crushing under their cloven hoofs the fallen pine-cones.

They retraced their steps between two long parallel galleries, from which tiny cells opened out. Tambourines and cymbals hung on the cedar columns. Extended on mats outside were women asleep. Their bodies were so greased with unguents that they exhaled an odour of aromatics and extinguished perfuming pans; and they were so covered with tattooing, collars, bracelets, vermilion and antimony, that, but for the movement of their breasts, they might easily have been mistaken for idols.

Lotuses were clustered round a fountain, where swam fish like Salammbô's; then in the background, against the wall of the temple, spread a vine, with tendrils of glass bearing clusters of emerald grapes; rays from the precious stones made a play of light between the painted columns over the faces of the sleeping women.

Mâtho felt suffocated in the warm atmosphere that pressed upon him from the cedar compartments. All these symbols of fecundation, the lights, the perfumes, and the exhalations overcame him. Through this mystic bewilderment he dreamed of Salammbô; she was confused in his mind with the goddess herself, and his passion grew stronger, unfolding and spreading itself from the depths of his being, as the great lotuses blossoming on the surface of the water.

Spendius calculated what sums of money he could have made in former days by the sale of these sleeping women and, with a rapid glance in passing, he computed the value of the gold necklaces.

The temple, on this side as on the other, was impenetrable. They retraced their steps behind the first chamber. While Spendius sought to ferret out an entrance, Mâtho, prostrate before the ivory gate, implored Tanit, supplicating her not to permit their contemplated sacrilege. He endeavoured to appease her by caressing words such as one might address to an angry person.

Meanwhile Spendius had descried a narrow aperture above the door.

"Stand up!" said Spendius.

Mâtho complied, putting his back against the wall, standing erect, while Spendius, placing one foot in his hands and the other on his head, was enabled to reach the air-hole, through which he crawled and disappeared. Then Mâtho felt the knotted rope that Spendius had wound about his body before entering the cisterns, strike his shoulder. Clutching it with both hands, he drew himself up until he reached the opening, through which he crawled, and found himself beside Spendius, in a large hall full of shadows.

An attempt like this was unthought-of. The inadequacy of the means to prevent it showed that it was deemed impossible. Inspired terrors, more than walls, defend such sanctuaries. Mâtho at every step expected to die.

A light gleamed in the far darkness; they drew nearer. It was a lamp burning in a shell placed on the pedestal of a statue

wearing the cap of the Kabiri. Diamond discs were strewn over her long blue robe, and chains, passing under the pavement stones, attached her heels to the ground. At the sight of this idol Mâtho suppressed a scream, stammering, "Ah! behold her! behold her!" . . . Spendius took up the lamp to light their way.

"How impious you are!" murmured Mâtho; and yet he followed him.

They entered an apartment containing nothing except a black painting representing another woman. Her legs reached to the top of one of the walls; her body filled the entire ceiling; from her navel hung suspended by a thread an enormous egg, and the remainder of her body, her head downward, descended the other wall to the level of the pavement, where her finger-points touched. To pass on further they drew aside a tapestry; but a puff of wind extinguished the light.

Then they groped about, bewildered by the complications of the architecture. Suddenly they felt under their feet something strangely soft. Sparks crackled and sprang; they seemed to tread on fire. Spendius patted the floor with his hands and could feel that it was carefully carpeted with lynx-skins. Then it seemed to them that a thick, moist rope, cold and clammy, slid between their legs. Through the fissures cut in the wall, thin rays of whiteness entered; they moved on by these uncertain streaks of light; presently they distinguished a large black serpent, as it darted quickly away and disappeared.

"Let us fly!" exclaimed Mâtho. "It is she! I feel her! She comes!"

"No! no," responded Spendius, "the temple is empty."

A dazzling light made them lower their eyes; all about them were innumerable beasts, emaciated, panting, extending their claws; those above were confused with those beneath in a horrible disorder, most frightful to behold. Serpents had feet; bulls had wings; fishes with human heads devoured fruits; flowers blossomed in crocodiles' jaws; and elephants, with their trunks elevated, floated through the air as freely and proudly as eagles. A terrible exertion distended their imperfect or mani-

fold members. They seemed as they thrust out their tongues to be fain to exhale their souls with their breath. All forms were found there, as if the receptacle of all germs had burst and emptied itself over the walls of the hall.

Twelve blue crystal globes encircled the room, supported on monsters resembling tigers. Their eyeballs protruded like those of snails, and menacingly curving their thick-set backs, they turned toward the farther part of the hall, where, radiant on an ivory chariot, was enthroned the supreme Rabbet, the Omnifecund, the last-imagined.

Tortoise shells, plumes, flowers, and birds were profusely heaped up about the idol, reaching to her waist. Silver cymbals hung from her ears and touched her cheeks. Her large fixed eyes stared upon the intruders; a luminous gem set in an obscene symbol on her forehead lighted the hall, and was reflected above the entrance in the red copper mirrors.

Mâtho took a step forward, a stone moved beneath his feet, and, behold! all the spheres revolved, the monsters roared, music rose melodious, swelling forth like the harmony of the planets; the tumultuous soul of Tanit gushed and expanded. She was about to rise and with outstretched arms fill the sanctuary. Suddenly the monsters closed their jaws, and the crystal globes revolved no longer. Then a solemn modulation coursed through the air, lasting for some time, and finally died away.

"The veil!" exclaimed Spendius. Nowhere could it be seen. Where was it to be found? How discover it? And if the priests had hidden it! Mâtho experienced an anguish of heart, and a disillusionment of faith.

"Come this way!" whispered Spendius. Guided by an inspiration, he led Mâtho behind Tanit's chariot, where a slit a cubit wide penetrated the wall from the top to the bottom. Through this they entered into a small, round room, so lofty that it resembled the interior of a column. In the centre was a large black stone, semi-spherical, like a tambourine; flames burned above it, and an ebony cone was erected at the back, bearing a head and two arms. Beyond appeared a cloud wherein stars scintillated; in the depths of its folds were figures representing Esch-

moûn, the Kabiri, many of the monsters they had already seen, the sacred beasts of the Babylonians, and numerous other unknown creatures. This passed like a mantle under the face of the idol, and, ascending, it spread out over the wall, hanging by the corners; it was at the same time bluish—like night; yellow—like dawn; and crimson—like the sun; harmonious, diaphanous, glittering, and light.

This was the mantle of the goddess, the sacred Zaïmph, which no one might behold! Both men grew pale.

“Take it!” said Mâtho finally. Spendius did not hesitate, but, leaning on the idol, unfastened the veil, which sank upon the ground. Mâtho placed one hand beneath it, and put his head through the opening in the middle; then he completely enveloped himself in the Zaïmph, and spread out his arms the better to contemplate its splendour.

“Let us go!” said Spendius.

Mâtho stood panting, with his eyes riveted on the pavement. Suddenly he exclaimed:

“But what if I now go to her? I no longer need fear her beauty! What can she compass against me? Behold, I am more than a man! I can traverse flames! I can walk on the sea! Transport possesses me! Salammbô! Salammbô! I am thy master!”

His voice thundered. He appeared to Spendius of greater height, and transfigured.

A sound of footsteps drew near; a door opened and a man appeared, a priest with a tall cap, peering about with wide-open eyes. Before he could make a sign, Spendius rushed upon him, grappled him and buried the two daggers in his side. His head rang upon the stone pavement.

They paused, as motionless as the body, listening. They heard nothing but the moaning of the wind through the half-open door. It led into a narrow passage. Spendius entered, followed by Mâtho. They almost immediately found themselves in the third enclosure, between the lateral porticoes among the quarters occupied by the priests. They hastened, hoping there might be some short way out behind the cells.

Spendius, crouching on the edge of the fountain, washed his

blood-stained hands. The women still slept; the emerald vine shone. They resumed their way.

Something ran behind them under the trees, and Mâtho, who wore the veil, frequently felt a gentle tug at the fringe; it was a large cynocephalus, one of those that lived at liberty in the precincts of the temple. This creature clung to the veil as if it were conscious of the theft; nevertheless they did not dare to strike it, fearful that it might cry more loudly. Suddenly its anger seemed to subside, and it trotted beside them, swinging its body and its long hanging arms.

On reaching the barrier it bounded into a palm tree.

Leaving the last enclosure, they headed toward Hamilcar's palace, Spendius seeing that it would be useless to endeavour to dissuade Mâtho from his course.

They went by the Tanners' street, through the square of Muthumbal, the vegetable market, and the crossroads of Cynasyn. At the corner of a wall a man recoiled, frightened by the sparkling object that passed through the darkness.

"Hide the Zaïmph," whispered Spendius.

Other people passed, but they were unobserved.

At length they reached the mansions of Megara. The lighthouse, built at the back on the summit of the cliff, lit up the sky with a large, clear, red light; and the shadow of the palace, with its rising terraces, was flung over the gardens like an immense pyramid. They entered the gardens through a hedge of jujube trees, cutting off obstructing branches with their poniards. Everything bore evidence of the Mercenaries' recent feast and depredations: the paddocks were broken down; the watercourses were dried up; the doors of the *ergastulum* stood open; no one was visible about the kitchens or cellars. They were surprised at the silence, broken only by the hoarse breathing of the elephants moving about in their paddocks, and the crepitations from the lighthouse, where a pile of aloes was burning.

Mâtho continued, repeating: "Where is she! I must see her; take me to her."

"It is madness," replied Spendius; "she will summon her slaves, and, in spite of your strength, you will be slain!"

They attained the stairway of the galleys. Mâtho raised his head, and imagined he could see high above a dim light softly radiating. Spendius tried to detain him, but he sprang swiftly up the steps.

Finding himself again in the place where he had previously seen her, the interval that had elapsed was instantly effaced from Mâtho's memory. A moment ago she was chanting between the tables—she had just disappeared—and ever since he seemed to have been climbing that stairway. The sky was covered with fire; the sea filled the horizon; and at every step an increasing immensity surrounded him; he continued to climb with that strange facility that one feels in dreams.

The rustling of the veil touching against the stones recalled his new power, but, in the excess of his hope, he no longer knew what to do, and this uncertainty alarmed him. From time to time he pressed his face against the quadrangular openings in the closed apartments, and in many he fancied he could faintly see sleepers within.

The last story was narrower, and formed a sort of thimble on the top of the terraces. Mâtho slowly walked around it. A milky light filled the talc-sheets which closed the little openings in the wall and, in their symmetrical arrangement, resembled in the darkness rows of fine pearls. Mâtho's heart thrilled as he recognised the red door with the black cross. He felt as if he must fly. He pushed the door, and it opened.

A suspended lamp, fashioned like a galley, burned at the extreme end of the room, and three rays escaping from its silver keel trembled over the high red wainscoting, which was decorated with black bands. A number of small gilded beams formed the ceiling, with amethysts and topazes set in the knots of the wood. Stretched against the wall of both sides of the room were very low couches made of white leathern straps; and shell-like arches opened in the depth of the wall, from which many garments in disorder hung down to the floor.

An onyx step surrounded an oval basin, on the edge of which rested a pair of dainty serpent-skin slippers, and beside them an alabaster pitcher. Wet footprints were clearly defined on the pavement beyond, and the vapours of exquisite perfumes floated everywhere.

Mâtho glided over the pavement, encrusted with gold, mother-of-pearl, and glass; and, despite the highly polished surface, it seemed to him that his feet sank, as if he were walking in sand. Behind the silver lamp he noticed a large azure square, suspended in the air by four cords; he drew toward it, with back bent and mouth open. Strewn about the room among purple cushions were flamingoes' wings, with handles of black coral branches, tortoise-shell combs, cedar caskets, and ivory spatulas. There were rows of rings, and bracelets hanging from antelopes' horns; and in a cleft in the walls, on a reed lattice, were clay vases, filled with water cooled by the incoming breezes. Frequently Mâtho struck his foot, as the floor was of unequal heights, making the chamber like a succession of apartments. At the far end a silver balustrade surrounded a carpet, painted with beautiful flowers. He reached the suspended couch, beside which stood an ebony stool, serving as a step.

The light was arrested at the edge of the couch, and the shadow, like a thick curtain, concealed all objects, save a little bare foot peering from under a white robe, resting on the corner of a red mattress. Mâtho very softly drew down the lamp. She slept, her cheek resting on one hand, the other arm thrown out and exposed. The curls of her wavy black hair tumbled about her in such abundance that she appeared actually to lie on a mass of black plumes; her white, wide tunic was crushed in soft draperies to her feet, indistinctly defining the outlines of her form; and her eyes were partially revealed between the half-closed lids. The perpendicular couch-hangings enshrouded her in a bluish atmosphere, and the swaying movement, imparted to the cords by her breathing, rocked her suspended couch in mid-air. A large mosquito buzzed.

Mâtho stood motionless, holding the silver lamp at arm's-length. Suddenly the airy mosquito nettings took fire and dis-

appeared. Salammbô awoke. The fire had extinguished itself. She did not speak. The lamp flickered over the wainscoting in wave-like splashes of light.

"What is it?" she exclaimed.

He responded: "It is the veil of the goddess."

"The veil of the goddess?" cried Salammbô, as, supporting herself on her hands, she leaned tremblingly over the side of the couch.

He continued: "I have sought it for you in the depths of the sanctuary! Behold!"

The Zaïmph glittered, covered with rays.

"Do you remember?" queried Mâtho. "In the night you came in my dreams; but I could not divine the mute command in your eyes."

She placed one foot on the ebony stool.

"Had I understood, I should have hastened, I should have abandoned the army, I should not have left Carthage. To obey you I would descend by the cavern of Hadrumetum into the realms of the Shades! Forgive me! Mountains have seemed to weigh upon my days, and yet something drew me on. I yearned to reach you; but without the aid of the gods I should never have dared! Let us depart; you must follow me, or if you do not desire to go I will remain. It makes no difference! Drown my soul in the sweetness of your breath! let my lips be crushed in kissing your hands!"

"Let me see it!" she exclaimed. "Nearer! nearer!"

As the dawn broke, a wine-coloured hue spread over the talc-sheets in the walls. Salammbô leaned back, fainting, on the pillows.

"I love you!" cried Mâtho.

"Give it to me!" and they drew nearer together.

She moved forward, robed in her white trailing simarre, her large eyes riveted on the veil. Mâtho contemplated her, dazzled by the splendour of her head. Holding toward her the Zaïmph, he endeavoured to envelop her in an embrace. She extended her arms. Suddenly she paused; and they stood, silently regarding each other with open mouths.

Without knowing what he asked, a horror seized her. She raised her delicate eyebrows, her lips parted, and she trembled; at length, recovering, she struck one of the brass pateras hanging at the corner of the red mattress, screaming:

"Help! Help! Back! Sacrilegious! Infamous! Accursed! Come to me, Taanach, Kroûm, Ewa, Micipsa, Schaoûl!"

And Spendius' scared face appeared in the wall between the flagons, as he cried with alarm, "Fly! they are coming!"

A great uproar broke out, shaking the stairway, and a host of women, varlets, and slaves burst into the apartment, carrying spears, maces, cutlasses, and poniards. They were paralysed with indignation when they saw a man. The female servants uttered funereal wails, and the eunuchs fairly paled under their black skins.

Mâtho stood behind the balustrade, the Zaïmph enveloping him; he resembled a sidereal god, environed by the firmament. The slaves were about to throw themselves upon him, but Salammbô stopped them.

"Do not touch him! It is the mantle of the goddess!"

She had retreated into a corner, but now she stepped toward Mâtho, and, extending her bare arm, cursed him:

"Malediction on you, who have plundered Tanit! Hate, vengeance, massacre, and sorrow! May Gurzil, god of battles, rend you! May Mastiman, god of death, strangle you! and may the Other—whom I dare not name—burn you!"

Mâtho uttered a cry, like one wounded by a spear.

Frequently she repeated, "Go! Go!"

The throng of servants parted as Mâtho with downcast eyes slowly passed out through the group. At the door he was stopped by the fringe of the Zaïmph becoming entangled on one of the golden stars adorning the pavement, but by an abrupt movement of his shoulders he detached it and descended the stairs.

Spendius, bounding from terrace to terrace, leaping over the hedges and ditches, escaped from the gardens and reached the foot of the lighthouse; here the wall was abandoned, as the cliff was inaccessible. He advanced to the edge, then, lying down on



"MALEDICTION ON YOU, WHO HAVE PLUNDERED TANIT!"

his back, slid to the bottom; then, swimming, he reached the Cape of the Tombs, whence he made a wide circuit of the lagoon, reëntering the Barbarians' camp at evening.

The sun had risen as Mâtho descended the road, glaring about him with terrible eyes, like a fleeing lion. An indistinct murmur, emanating from the palace, and reëchoed in the distance from the direction of the Acropolis, struck his ears. It was rumoured that someone had taken from the temple of Moloch the treasure of Carthage; others spoke of the assassination of a priest; elsewhere it was imagined that the Barbarians had entered the city.

Mâtho, not knowing how to get out of the enclosures, followed a straight path; as soon as he was seen a clamour was raised. The people understood; consternation ensued; then an immense rage possessed them. From the back part of the Mapalian quarter, from the heights of the Acropolis, from the catacombs, from the lake shore, multitudes ran. The patricians left their palaces, tradesmen their shops, women abandoned their children; some seized swords, axes, and clubs; but the same superstitious obstacle that had hindered Salammbô likewise checked the mob. How could they retake the veil? Only to look upon it was a crime; it was of the nature of the gods, and mere contact was death.

On the peristyles of the temples the priests wrung their hands in sheer desperation. The guards of the Legion galloped at random; people went up on the house-tops, thronged the terraces, and climbed upon the shoulders of the colossi and into the ships' riggings. Still Mâtho proceeded, and at every step the rage and terror of the people increased. The streets cleared at his approach, and the human torrent receded on both sides to the top of the walls. Mâtho saw everywhere only glaring eyes, wide-open as if to devour him, and defiant, clenched fists, and he heard gnashing teeth between threatening lips; but above all Salammbô's maledictions resounded in his ears, in multiplied echoes.

Suddenly a long arrow whirred past, then another, and still another; stones also flew by, only to rebound about him on the

ground; the missiles, all poorly aimed, for the throwers feared to strike the Zaïmph, passed over his head. Recognising this fact, Mâtho made the veil serve as a shield, holding it first to the right, then to the left; then before, then behind him: thus thwarted, they could invent no expedient. He walked faster and faster; finding the street openings all impassable, barred by ropes, chariots, and snares, his attempts to effect egress were balked, and he had again and again to retrace his steps; at length he entered the Square of Khamoûn, where the Balearic slingers had perished. Mâtho stopped, and grew as pale as death. This time he surely was lost. The multitude, witnessing his dilemma, clapped their hands with joy.

He ran up to the huge, closed gate. It was very high and most formidably constructed of heart of oak sheathed with brass, and studded with iron nails. Mâtho flung himself with all his might against it; the people stamped their feet, wild with delight at witnessing the impotence of his fury. Then he removed his sandal, spat upon it, and struck the immovable panels with it; again the entire concourse of people yelled, forgetting the veil in their transport.

They were about to rush forward to crush him. Mâtho gazed with large vague eyes at the crowd. His temples throbbed giddily; he felt invaded by such enervation as besets a drunken man. All at once he caught sight of the long chain that worked the lever of the gate. With a fierce bound he grasped, and forcibly pulled the chain, at the same time using his feet as a buttress; finally the enormous valves half-opened.

Once outside, he took the sublime Zaïmph from his neck, and lifted it over his head as high as possible. Distended and borne up by the sea breeze, the glittering material became resplendent in the sunshine, displaying its wondrous medley of inshot colours and precious stones; and over all its sheen could be descried the faint images of its gods.

Thus Mâtho bore his trophy across the entire plain until he reached the camp of the Barbarians, and from the walls the irate people watched the fortune of Carthage pass into the hands of the enemy.



"I SHOULD have brought her with me!" Mâtho kept muttering to Spendius that evening. "I should have seized and carried her from her palace! No one would have dared stop me!"

Spendius paid no attention as he lay on his back enjoying himself beside a large jar of honey-water, wherein he would from time to time dip his head, in order to drink more copiously.

Mâtho resumed: "What is to be done? . . . How can we gain entrance again into Carthage?"

"I do not know," answered Spendius.

This indifference exasperated Mâtho, who exclaimed:

"What! The fault is yours! You led me; then you desert me, coward that you are! Why then should I obey you? Do you believe yourself my master? Oh! panderer, slave, son of slaves!" He ground his teeth in wrath, and raised his large hand above Spendius.

The Greek did not reply. A clay lamp burned low against the tent-pole, where the Zaïmph glittered in the suspended panoply.

All at once Mâtho drew on his cothurns, buckled on his jacket of plates of brass, and put on his helmet.

"Where are you going?" asked Spendius.

"I am going back. Let me alone! I shall carry her off! And if they oppose me I shall crush them like vipers! I shall put her to death, Spendius! Yes," he repeated, "I shall kill her! You will see, I shall kill her!"

Then Spendius, who had his ears open, hurriedly pulled down the Zaïmph, threw it into a corner, and covered it with fleeces.

A murmur of voices was heard; torches blazed; and Narr' Havas entered, followed by about twenty men. They wore white woolen mantles, leather collars, wooden earrings, and hyena-skin shoes, and were armed with daggers. Pausing at the threshold, they leaned upon their lances, like shepherds resting.

Narr' Havas was the handsomest of the group. The leather straps encircling his slender arms were ornamented with pearls. His wide mantle was fastened round his head by a gold band, from which an ostrich plume fell drooping on his shoulders. A continual smile revealed his teeth; his eyes were sharp as arrows; his entire bearing was observant, and yet cool and indifferent.

He declared that he had come to join the Mercenaries, as the Republic had for a long time menaced his kingdoms; consequently, he was interested in aiding the Barbarians, and he possessed the power to be of service to them.

"I will give you elephants, for my forests are full of them; with wine, oil, barley, dates, pitch and sulphur for sieges; with twenty thousand foot soldiers, and ten thousand horses. If I now address you, Mâtho, it is because the possession of the Zaïmph has rendered you of the first importance in the army; we were also friends at one time," he added.

Meanwhile Mâtho looked at Spendius, who listened intently, sitting on a heap of sheep-skins, all the time making little signs of assent with his head.

Narr' Havas talked on, calling upon the gods to witness his sincerity. Then he cursed Carthage. To attest the violence of his imprecations, he broke a javelin, and all his men uttered in uni-

son a deafening shout; until Mâtho, carried away by this fury, cried out that he accepted the proffered alliance.

Then they brought a white bull and a black sheep—symbolical of day and night—which they slaughtered on the edge of a pit, and, when it became full of blood, they plunged their arms into it. Afterwards Narr' Havas placed his outspread hand on Mâtho's breast, and Mâtho placed his hand on Narr' Havas' breast; then they repeated the stigmata on their tent-cloths. Subsequently the night was passed in eating. The remnants of meat, with all the skins, bones, horns, and hoofs were burned.

Mâtho, at the time he returned to the camp wearing the veil of the goddess, had been greeted with tremendous acclamation. Even those who were not of the Canaanite religion felt in their vague enthusiasm the advent of a genius. As for seeking to capture the Zaïmph, no one thought of such a thing; the mysterious manner whereby he had acquired it sufficed in the minds of the Barbarians to make his possession of it legitimate. Thus thought the soldiers of African race; but others, whose hatred against the Republic was of more recent origin, knew not what to think. If they had only possessed ships, they would have immediately set sail for their own countries.

Spendius, Narr' Havas, and Mâtho sent envoys to all the tribes of the Punic territory. Carthage had exhausted the strength of these people by exorbitant taxes, punishing delinquents, and even complainers, by chains, the executioner's axe, or the cross. It was compulsory to cultivate that which pleased the Republic, and furnish what she demanded. No one had the right to own a weapon. Whenever villages rebelled, the inhabitants were sold as slaves; the governors were judged like wine-presses, by the amount of taxes they could squeeze out.

Beyond the region immediately subject to Carthage were their allies who were burdened with only a moderate tribute; beyond these allies wandered the Nomads, who could be let loose upon them. By this system the harvests were always abundant, the breeding studs skilfully conducted, the plantations superb. Old Cato, a master in agriculture and slave-raising, ninety-two years later was amazed at it, and the death cry, "*De-*

lenda est Carthago," repeated by him in Rome, was but an exclamation of jealous cupidity.

During the last war the exactions had been doubled, so that nearly all the towns of Libya had surrendered to Regulus. As punishment, the Republic extorted from them one thousand talents, twenty thousand head of cattle, three hundred sacks of gold-dust, and considerable advances of grain; and the tribal chiefs had been crucified or thrown to the lions.

Carthage was especially execrated by Tunis. Older than the metropolis, she could not forgive her grandeur, as she lay fronting its walls, crouching in the mud on the water's edge, like a malignant beast watching its prey. Deportations, massacres, epidemics, had not enfeebled her; moreover, she had supported Archagathus, son of Agathocles. The Eaters-of-Unclean-Things soon found arms there.

The couriers had not as yet set out on their mission when a universal joy spread abroad throughout the provinces. Without waiting for provocation they strangled the stewards of the houses and the functionaries of the Republic in the baths; old weapons were brought forth from caverns, where they had formerly been hidden, and the iron of ploughs was forged into swords; children deftly whetted javelins on the doorsteps; and the women contributed their necklaces, rings, earrings, and, in fact, everything that could be transposed or employed in any manner for the desired destruction of Carthage. Each one wished to give something. Stacks of lances accumulated in the country towns like sheaves of maize. Cattle and money were sent to Mâtho, who at once paid all arrears to the Mercenaries, and this, which had been suggested by Spendius, resulted in Mâtho being named Schalischim of the Barbarians.

Meanwhile men trooped in from all quarters. First came the aborigines, who were followed by the slaves from the fields. Caravans of Negroes were seized and armed, and the merchants who were going to Carthage, calculating on a more certain and speedy profit, joined in with the Barbarians. Unceasingly numerous bands arrived, and from the heights of the Acropolis the Carthaginians could see the army rapidly growing.

On the platform of the aqueduct the Guards of the Legion were posted as sentinels, and near them, at certain distances, were erected huge brazen vats, in which boiled quantities of asphalt. Below, on the plain, the vast concourse stirred about tumultuously. They were uncertain, experiencing that embarrassment with which Barbarians are always filled whenever they encounter walls.

Utica and Hippo-Zarytus withheld their alliance. Phœnician colonies like Carthage were self-governed; and in the treaties which the Republic concluded they had always insisted upon clauses to distinguish them from it. Yet they respected this stronger sister, who protected them, and they did not believe that a mass of Barbarians would be able to vanquish her, but on the contrary, that Carthage could annihilate the enemy. They desired to remain neutral and live peacefully.

But the position of these two colonies rendered them indispensable. Utica, at the end of a gulf, was convenient to bring assistance from without into Carthage. If Utica alone should be captured, then Hippo-Zarytus, six hours further along on the coast, could replace the loss, and the metropolis, being thus re-victualled, would be found impregnable.

Spendius wanted the siege to be begun immediately. Narr' Havas strongly opposed such hasty action, holding that it was first necessary to attack the frontier. This was the opinion of the veterans called in council, and approved by Mâtho. It was decided that Spendius should attack Utica; Mâtho, Hippo-Zarytus; that the third army corps, commanded by Autharitus, resting upon Tunis, should occupy the Carthaginian plain; and that Narr' Havas should return to his own kingdom to procure elephants, and with his cavalry hold the roads.

The women clamoured violently against this decision; for they coveted the jewels of the Punic ladies. The Libyans also protested, declaring that they had been summoned to engage in a siege against Carthage, and now they were ordered away from it. The soldiers departed almost alone. Mâtho commanded his own companions, also the Iberians and Lusitanians, the men from the West and from the islands; while those who

spoke Greek requested that they might be placed under Spendius's command, because of his astuteness.

Great was the stupefaction of the Carthaginians when they saw this army all at once in motion, skirting the mountain of Ariana, along the seacoast road to Utica. A detachment remained before Tunis; the rest disappeared, to reappear on the other shore of the gulf, on the outskirts of the woods, in which it was again lost to view.

Possibly this army numbered eighty thousand men. The two Tyrian cities would offer no resistance, and they would return against Carthage. Already a considerable army cut her off, occupying the base of the isthmus, and soon Carthage would be in a state of famine, as the people were dependent on the aid of the provinces, the citizens paying no tithes, as at Rome.

Carthage was weak in political genius. Her eternal strife for gain had prevented her from exercising that prudence which encourages the highest ambition. She was like a galley anchored on the Libyan sands, maintained there by sheer force. The nations, like billows, roared about her, and the least storm shook this formidable machine to the foundation.

Her treasury had been depleted by the Roman war and all that had been squandered and lost during the bargaining with the Barbarians. However, she must have soldiers, and not a government now reposed trust in the Republic! Ptolemy, a short time before, had refused to loan Carthage two thousand talents. Besides, all were discouraged by the rape of the Veil. Spendius had foreseen this.

But the nation, which felt itself detested, clasped to its heart its money and its gods, and its patriotism was maintained by the constitution of its government.

In the first place, the power belonged to all, without anyone being able to monopolize it. Personal debts were considered as public debts. The men of Canaanite race had the monopoly of commerce. In multiplying the profits of piracy by the practice of usury, and by rigorously exacting to the extreme limit from the slaves, the lands and the poor, men sometimes became wealthy. Wealth alone opened all the magistracies, and

even though the power and money were perpetuated in the same families, the oligarchy was tolerated because each had the hope of some day sharing in it.

The commercial organizations, that made the laws, elected the inspectors of finance, to whose discretion it was left, on quitting office, to nominate the hundred members of the Council of Elders who belonged to the Grand Assembly, a general convention of all the Rich.

As for the two Suffetes, the relics of monarchy and inferior to consuls, they were elected on the same day, from two distinct families. It was desirable that they should be divided by various animosities, and thus mutually enfeebled. They were not empowered to make the war, and when they were defeated the Grand Council crucified them.

Hence the strength of Carthage emanated from the Syssites, who were established in a grand court in the centre of Malqua, the spot where it was supposed the first bark manned by Phœnician sailors had landed. Since that period the sea had retreated considerably. It was a group of small chambers of an archaic architecture, built from the trunks of palm trees, with stone corner-pieces, separated one from another, affording to each chamber complete isolation for the various companies in their conferences. The Rich gathered therein daily to discuss their own affairs, as well as those of the Government, from the procuring of pepper to the conquest of Rome.

Three times every moon they had their couches carried up on the high terrace, bordering the wall of the court; and from below they could be seen sitting at table in the open air, without cothurns or mantles; their diamonds flashing on their fingers as they handled their food, and their large earrings glittering as they dangled between the flagons. They were all strong and fat, half-naked, happy, and laughing, eating in the open under the blue sky, like huge sharks disporting themselves in the sea.

This time, however, they could not dissemble their anxiety; they were too pale. The crowd below waited to escort them to their palaces, in the hope of ascertaining some news. As during

times of the plague, all the houses were closed; occasionally the streets would suddenly swarm with people, and just as suddenly empty and become deserted. Some ascended the Acropolis, others ran toward the harbour. Every night the Grand Council deliberated. At last the people were convened in the square of Khamoûn, and it was officially announced that they had decided to place their fate in the hands of Hanno, the great conqueror of Hecatompylus.

He was a pious crafty man, merciless to the Africans—a true Carthaginian. His revenues equalled those of the Barcas, and no other man had such experience in administrative affairs.

Hanno decreed the enrollment of all able-bodied citizens, placed catapults upon the towers, demanded exorbitant supplies of weapons, ordered the construction of fourteen galleys, which were not required; and commanded that everything be registered and accurately set down in writing. He was carried by his slaves to the lighthouse, the arsenal, and into the treasury of the temples; and was continually to be seen in his large litter, as it rocked from step to step, ascending or descending the stairways of the Acropolis. At night, in his palace, being unable to sleep, he prepared himself for the coming battle by shouting out military orders in a terrible voice.

Excess of fear made everyone brave. The Rich at cock-crow would assemble along the length of Mappals, tucking up their robes as they practised the use of the pike. But having no instructor, they disputed among themselves as to methods. They would sit panting on the tombs, then begin their exercises again after resting. Many even dieted. Some imagined that to acquire strength it was necessary to eat large quantities, and gorged themselves; others, incommoded by corpulence, endeavoured to reduce themselves by fastings.

Utica had already frequently asked the assistance of Carthage; but Hanno would not move until the last screw was set in every war machine. He lost three more moons of time in the equipment of the hundred and twelve elephants, stabled in the ramparts. These vanquishers of Regulus, so loved by the people, certainly could not be treated too well. Hanno ordered

their brazen breastplates to be recast, their tusks gilded, their towers enlarged, and had made for them most beautiful purple caparisons, bordered with very heavy fringes. Inasmuch as their leaders were called Indians (the first doubtless having come from the Indies), he ordered that they should wear Indian costumes, consisting of a white turban, and little breeches of byssus, which, with their transverse pleats, looked like two valves of a shell, fastened on their hips.

During all these preparations, the army commanded by Autharitus remained stationed before Tunis, concealed behind a mud wall, and protected on the top by thorn-bushes. The Negroes erected, in various places on large stakes, frightful images, human masks composed of birds' feathers, heads of jackals and serpents, which gaped toward the enemy to frighten them; by such measures the Barbarians considered themselves to be utterly invincible, and danced, wrestled, and juggled, convinced that Carthage before long would be destroyed.

Any other general than Hanno could have easily crushed this multitude, embarrassed by herds and women. Besides, they knew nothing of maneuvers, and Autharitus had grown so discouraged that he no longer drilled them.

They scattered before him as he passed by, rolling his large blue eyes. Then when he arrived at the lake shore, he would remove his seal-skin tunic, untie the cord holding back his long red locks, and soak them in the water. He regretted that he had not deserted to the Romans with the two thousand Gauls of the temple of Eryx.

Frequently during the middle of the day the sun's rays suddenly vanished; then the gulf and open sea seemed as motionless as molten lead. A cloud of brown dust rising perpendicularly would course along in whirling eddies, under the force of which the palm trees bowed, the sky became obscured, stones could be heard rebounding on the backs of the animals, and the Gaul would glue his lips against the holes in his tent, gasping from exhaustion and melancholy. In fancy he inhaled the perfumes of his native pastures on autumn mornings, he saw the snowflakes, and again heard the lowing of aurochs lost in the

fog; then closing his eyes, he seemed to see the fires in the long cabins thatched with straw, as they quivered on the marshes at the edge of the woods.

There were others who regretted their native country as much as he, though it might not be so far away. The Carthaginian captives could indeed distinguish, at the other side of the gulf, on the declivities of Byrsa, the canopies spread over the courts of their dwellings. But sentinels marched around these prisoners perpetually. All were attached to a common chain. Each wore an iron yoke, and the crowd never tired of coming to look at them. The women showed their little children the beautiful Punic robes hanging in tatters upon their shrunken limbs.

Whenever Autharitus saw Gisco, a fury possessed him at the thought of the insult, and but for the oath he had made to Narr' Havas, he would have killed him. He would then return to his tent and drink a mixture of barley and cumin, till he became dead drunk, awakening at noontime consumed by a horrible thirst.

Meantime, Mâtho was besieging Hippo-Zarytus.

This town was protected by a lake communicating with the sea. It had three lines of fortifications, and on the heights which overlooked it, a wall extended, fortified by towers. Mâtho had never before commanded in such an undertaking. Moreover, the thought of Salammbô beset him, and he dreamed of the pleasures of her beauty, as in the sweetness of a revenge that transported him with pride. His desire to see her again was bitter, furious, unceasing. He even thought of offering himself as a bearer of a flag of truce, in the hope that once in Carthage he might make his way to her. Often he would sound the signal for assault, and without waiting for anything or anyone, would dart on to the mole that they were endeavouring to construct in the sea. Here he tore up the stones with his hands, turned everything upside down, plunging and striking about in every direction with his sword. The Barbarians followed his leadership, and dashed pellmell upon the works; the overcrowded ladders would break with a loud crash, and masses of men tumble into

the water, which leaped in reddened waves against the walls. At last the tumult would lessen and the soldiers withdraw to renew the assault.

Mâtho would seat himself outside his tent, wipe his blood-bespattered face, and, facing towards Carthage, gaze wistfully at the horizon.

Opposite him, among the olive, palm, myrtle, and plane trees, were two wide pools, which joined another lake, the outline of which was not visible from this point. Behind a mountain rose other mountains, and in the middle of the immense lake stood an island, perfectly black, of a pyramidal shape. On the left, at the extremity of the gulf, the sand heaps resembled great golden billows arrested in their course, and the sea, flat as a pavement of lapis-lazuli, ascended imperceptibly to the sky. The verdure of the country disappeared in places under long yellow patches; the carobs shone bright as coral buttons; the vines hung in festoons from the top of sycamores. The faint murmuring of the water was audible, tufted skylarks hopped about, and the last flashes of the sun gilded the shells of the tortoises as they came out of the rushes to inhale the sea breeze.

Mâtho, sighing deeply, lay flat on the ground, digging his nails into the sand, and wept, feeling wretched, mean, and forsaken. He could never possess her. He could not even capture a town.

At night, alone in his tent, he contemplated the Zaiïmph. Of what use to him was this possession of the gods? And doubts sprang up in the Barbarian's mind. Then it seemed to him, on the contrary, that the vestment of the goddess was draped about Salammbô, and that part of her soul floated in it, more subtle than a breath; and he caressingly patted it, breathed with his face buried in its folds, kissed it with sobs. He drew it over his shoulders to intensify the illusion that he was embracing her.

Sometimes by the light of the stars he would suddenly leave his tent, stepping over the sleeping soldiers wrapped in their mantles; then at the gates of the camp he would leap upon a horse, gallop away, and two hours afterwards be at Utica in

the tent of Spendius. At first he would talk of the siege, but his real motive was to ease his sadness by talking about Salammbô.

Spendius exhorted him to wisdom.

"Expel from your soul these miseries that but degrade it! Formerly you obeyed, but now you command an army; and if Carthage is not conquered, at least we shall have provinces granted to us, and we shall become as kings!"

But why was it that the possession of the Zaïmph had failed to give them victory? According to Spendius it was necessary to wait.

Mâtho imagined that perhaps the veil concerned exclusively those of the Canaanite race, and with barbarian subtilty said to himself: "The Zaïmph will avail me nothing; but, because they have lost it, it avails them nothing."

Then a scruple troubled him. He feared that by adoring the Libyan god Aptouknos he would offend Moloch, and he timidly asked Spendius to which of these gods it would be better to sacrifice a man.

"Always sacrifice!" said Spendius, laughing.

Mâtho did not understand such indifference, and suspected that the Greek had a genius of whom he did not wish to speak.

All religions, as all races, met together in these Barbarian armies, and they were ever considerate of the gods of others, for they also inspired terror. Many mingled foreign practices in their native religion. It was not fitting to adore the stars, but this or that constellation being fatal or helpful, they made sacrifices to it. An unknown amulet, found by chance in a moment of peril, became a divinity. Or perhaps it was a name—nothing but a name—which they repeated without ever attempting to understand its meaning. But as a result of having pillaged numerous temples, and seen many nations and massacres, many ended by believing only in fate and death, and every night they slept with the perfect placidity of savage beasts. Spendius would have spat upon the images of Jupiter Olympus; notwithstanding, he dreaded to speak aloud in the dark, and never failed to put on his right sandal first.

Confronting Utica he raised a long quadrangular terrace; but as fast as it rose the ramparts were also heightened. What one side tore down was almost immediately re-erected by the other. Spendius husbanded his troops; he constantly devised plans, and endeavoured to recall the stratagems he had heard recounted in his travels. Why did not Narr' Havas return? Anxiety was general.

Hanno had completed his preparations. During one moonless night he moved his elephants and soldiers on rafts across the Gulf of Carthage. They then turned around the Hot-Springs Mountain, to avoid Autharitus, and proceeded so slowly that, instead of surprising the Barbarians the next morning, as the Suffete had planned, they only arrived at noon on the third day.

On the eastern side of Utica a plain reached as far as the great lagoon of Carthage; behind it, at right angles, extended a valley, cutting between two low mountains, which closed in suddenly. Further off, to the left, the Barbarians were encamped in such a manner as to blockade the harbour. They were sleeping in their tents—as on this day besieged and besiegers were too weary to enter into combat, and had sought repose—when at the curve of the hills the Carthaginian army appeared.

The camp followers, armed with slings, were stationed on the wings. The Guards of the Legion, wearing armour of golden scales, formed the first line: their large horses, which had neither manes, hair, nor ears, wore a silver horn in the centre of their foreheads, to make them resemble rhinoceroses. Between their squadrons, young men, wearing on their heads small helmets, balanced in both hands ash-wood javelins; the heavy infantry, armed with long pikes, marched in the rear. All these merchant-soldiers had burdened themselves with as many weapons as they could possibly carry: some bore a lance, an axe, a mace, and two swords: others, like porcupines, bristled with darts, and their arms stood out from their cuirasses of sheets of horn, or plaques of metal. Finally the scaffoldings of the

lofty war engines appeared: carroballistas, onagers, catapults and scorpions, rocking on cars, drawn by mules and quadrigas of oxen. As the army spread out, the captains ran breathlessly to right and left, giving orders, closing up the lines, and maintaining proper spaces. The Elders who were in command had come decked in purple casques, the magnificent fringes of which became entangled in the straps of their cothurns. Their faces, greased over with vermilion, glistened under enormous helmets, surmounted by images of the gods. They carried shields bordered with ivory, and studded with jewels; as they passed in glittering array, they appeared like suns traversing brass walls.

The Carthaginians manœuvred so awkwardly that the Barbarians, in derision, invited them to be seated; and shouted that they would soon empty their huge bellies, dust the gilding from their skins, and make them drink iron.

At the top of a pole planted before the tent of Spendius, a strip of green cloth fluttered as a signal. The Carthaginians responded to it by a great bluster of trumpets, cymbals, drums, and flutes made of asses' bones. Already the Barbarians had leaped beyond the palisades, and now were face to face with their enemies, within a javelin's length of them.

A Balearic slinger advanced a step, placed in his sling one of his clay balls, and waved his arm: an ivory shield was shattered, and the two armies closed.

The Greeks with their long lances pricked the horses' nostrils, making them fall back on their riders; the slaves whose duty it was to sling stones had chosen ones that were too big, and they fell short. The Punic foot soldiers, in striking out with their long swords to cut down the enemy, exposed their right sides; the Barbarians broke into their lines, thrusting at them with their broad swords: they madly stumbled over the dying and dead, blinded by the blood that spurted into their faces. The confused mass of pikes, helmets, cuirasses, swords, and human limbs quivered and writhed, widening and narrowing in elastic contractions. The Carthaginian cohorts showed wider and wider gaps; their heavy war engines could not be extricated from the

sands; and finally the Suffete Hanno's litter—his grand litter, with the crystal pendulums, that had been seen since the very beginning of the attack swaying among the soldiers like a barque on the ocean—suddenly foundered. Had he been killed? The Barbarians found themselves alone.

The dust was beginning to settle, and they were breaking into song when Hanno himself reappeared mounted on an elephant. He sat bareheaded while a Negro carried over him an umbrella of byssus. His collar of blue plaques struck on the painted flowers of his black tunic, circles of diamonds surrounded his enormous arms; he advanced, mouth wide open, brandishing an enormous spear which expanded at the end like a lotus and was more brilliant than a mirror.

The earth trembled, and suddenly the Barbarians saw, bearing down upon them in one straight line, all the Carthaginian elephants, with their tusks gilded, ears painted blue, sheathed in bronze, shaking above their purple caparisons the leather towers, in each of which were three archers holding large, drawn bows.

The soldiers scarcely had time to seize their arms, they were ranged at random, frozen with terror, and helpless from indecision.

Already from the towers volleys of arrows and javelins, fire-lances and masses of lead were being hurled down on them. Some clung on to the fringes of the caparisons, in an effort to climb up, but their hands were hewn off with cutlasses, and they fell backward on the drawn swords of their own comrades.

Their pikes were too frail and broke. The elephants plunged into the phalanxes like wild boars through clumps of grasses. They uprooted the palisades with their trunks, and traversed the camp from end to end, overturning the tents with their breasts.

Panic-stricken, the Barbarians took to flight, hiding themselves in the hills that bordered the valley whence the Carthaginians had issued.

Hanno presented himself before the gates of Utica as conqueror, and sounded his trumpet. The three judges of the city

appeared in the opening of the battlements, on the summit of a tower. The people of Utica did not care to receive as guests so many armed men. Hanno was furious. Finally they consented to admit him with a small escort.

The streets were too narrow to admit the elephants, so they had to be left outside the city gates.

As soon as the Suffete entered the town, the principal men came to welcome him. He demanded to be immediately conducted to the bath-house, and there summoned his cooks.

Three hours later he was still immersed in the oil of cinnamon with which the bath-tub had been filled, and while bathing he ate, from off an ox-hide stretched across the tub, flamingoes' tongues and poppy-seeds, seasoned with honey. His Greek doctor, in a long, yellow robe, stood beside him, immobile, from time to time directing the temperature of the bath; and two young boys leaned on the steps of the bath rubbing his legs. But the care of his body did not interfere with his love for public affairs, for he occupied himself with the dictation of a letter to the Grand Council; and as some prisoners had been taken, he pondered as to what terrible new torture could be invented for them.

"Stop!" said he to the slave who stood near, writing on the palm of his hand. "Let them be brought to me! I wish to see them."

And from the end of the hall, which was now filled with a whitish vapour, on which the torches cast red spots, someone pushed forward three Barbarians: a Samnite, a Spartan, and a Cappadocian.

"Proceed!" said Hanno. "Rejoice, light of the Baals! your Suffete has exterminated the ravenous dogs! Benedictions on the Republic! Order prayers to be said!" He perceived the captives, and then burst into laughter. "Ha! ha! ha! my braves of Sicca. You do not shout so loud to-day. It is I! Do you recognise me? Where are your swords? What terrible men are these!"—and he feigned to hide as if he experienced great fear.—"You



THE ELEPHANTS PLUNGED INTO THE PHALANXES

asked for horses, women, lands, magistracies, and doubtless also for priesthoods! Why not? Ah, well, I will give you the lands, and you shall never leave them. You shall be married to gallows that are new! For your pay, ingots of lead shall be melted in your mouths, and I will put you in the very best places, far up and exalted, among the clouds, near the eagles!"

The three Barbarians, long-haired and tattered, looked at him without understanding what he said. Wounded in the knees, they had been lassoed and captured, and the ends of the heavy chains on their hands dragged on the stones. Hanno was indignant at their impassibility.

"On your knees! On your knees! Jackals! Dirt! Vermin! Excrement! And they do not reply? Enough! Silence! Let them be flayed alive! No! not now, presently!"

He snorted like a hippopotamus, and rolled his eyes about. The perfumed oil trickled down his gross body, sticking to the scales on his skin; and the torchlights threw over him a pink hue.

He resumed his official letter: "During four days we suffered intensely from the sun. In the passage of the Macar we lost some mules. Despite the enemy's position, the extraordinary courage. . . . Oh! Demonades, how I suffer! Have the bricks reheated till they are red hot."

A raking noise was heard in the furnaces. The incense smoked in the large perfume pans, and the shampooers, entirely naked, dripping like sponges, anointed his joints with a paste composed of wheat, sulphur, black-wine, bitches'-milk, myrrh, galban, and storax. An incessant thirst consumed him. The man dressed in the yellow robe, however, did not yield to his patient's desire; he held to him a golden cup in which steamed a broth of vipers.

"Drink!" urged he, "that the strength of the serpents, born of the sun, may penetrate the marrow of your bones. And take courage, O reflection of the gods! You know, moreover, that a priest of Eschmoûn watches the cruel stars around the Dog whence you derive your malady. They pale like the spots on your skin; therefore you will not die."

"Ah, yes! That is true!" repeated the Suffete. "I ought not to die of them!"

And from his violet purple lips escaped a breath more nauseous than the exhalations of a corpse. His eyes, which were without lashes, resembled two burning coals; heavy folds of skin hung on his forehead; his ears stood out from his head, and began to swell; and the deep wrinkles that formed semi-circles around his nostrils gave him a strange, frightful aspect, the air of a savage brute. His unnatural voice resembled a roar as he said: "Perhaps you are right, Demonades. Look, even now some of the ulcers are closed; I feel stronger! See how I eat!"

And, less from gluttony than ostentation—and to convince himself that he was really improving—he first ate of the minced cheese and marjoram, then the boned-fish, pumpkin, oysters with eggs, horseradish, truffles and brochettes of little birds. Watching the prisoners while he ate, he delighted in the imagination of their tortures. But he recalled Sicca; and his rage for all his sufferings was showered in a volley of insults on these three men.

"Ah, traitors! Wretches! Infamous! Accursed! And you outraged me! Me!—the Suffete Hanno! Their services, the price of their blood, as they have said. Ah! yes! their blood! their blood!" Then he talked to himself: "All shall perish! Not one shall be sold! It would be best to bring them to Carthage. No, let me see . . . without doubt I have not brought enough chains. . . . Write: 'Send to me.' . . . How many prisoners are there? Let someone go and ask Muthumbal. Go! No pity! And have all their hands cut off, and brought to me in baskets!"

But strange cries, at once hoarse and shrill, penetrated the hall, above Hanno's voice and the clatter of the dishes which were being placed around him. The cries increased; and in an instant a furious trumpeting of elephants burst forth, as if the battle had broken out anew. A tremendous tumult encompassed the town.

The Carthaginians had not attempted to pursue the Barbarians. They had established themselves at the foot of the

walls with their baggage, varlets, and all their satraps' train, to rejoice under their beautiful pearl-embroidered tents. The Mercenaries' camp was nothing but a heap of ruins on the plain. In the meantime Spendius had regained his courage. He despatched Zaxas to Mâtho, and hastened through the woods to rally his men. Their losses were not great, and enraged at having been thus conquered without fighting, they were reforming their lines, when a vat of petroleum, doubtless left by the enemy, was discovered. Spendius had swine carried off from the neighbouring farmhouses, besmeared them with the bitumen, and setting fire to them, turned them loose toward Utica. The elephants, terrified by the flames, stampeded. The ground inclined upwards; a volley of javelins was hurled upon the infuriated creatures; they turned back upon the Carthaginians, ripped them up with strokes of their tusks and, trampling them beneath their massive feet, suffocated and crushed them. The Barbarians descended the hill behind them; the Punic camp, being without entrenchments, was sacked at the first attack, and the Carthaginians found themselves crushed against the city gates, which were kept closed from fear of the Mercenaries.

At daybreak Mâtho's foot soldiers were seen advancing from the west, and at the same time the Numidian cavalry of Narr' Havas appeared, bounding over the ravines and underbrush, running down the fugitives like hounds chasing hares. This change of fortune interrupted the Suffete, and he screamed for someone to assist him to leave the vapour bath.

Before him still stood the three captives. A Negro, the same who had carried his umbrella during the battle, leaned over and whispered something in his ear.

"What?" slowly asked the Suffete. "Ah, well, kill them!" he added, in a brusque tone.

The Ethiopian drew from his belt a long dagger, and the three heads fell. One rebounded into the midst of the recent feast, then rolled into the tub of oil, and floated for some time with open mouth and fixed eyes.

The morning light entered the slits in the walls; the three bodies lay on their breasts. Great streams gurgled from the

headless trunks like fountains, and a sheet of blood flowed over the mosaics, which were sanded with blue powder. The Suffete dipped his hands in the warm pool, rubbing the blood over his knees, this being considered a remedy for his malady.

Evening came. He escaped from Utica with his escort, making his way to the mountains to rejoin his army. He found only the remnants of it. Four days later he was at Gorza, on the top of a defile, when Spendius' troops showed themselves below. Had twenty good lancers attacked the front of their advancing column, they could easily have checked them; but the paralysed Carthaginians watched them pass by. Hanno recognised in the rear guard the Numidian king. Narr' Havas bowed his head in salutation, making a sign that he could not interpret.

Hanno's forces returned toward Carthage in terror, marching only at night, and hiding by day in the olive woods. During every stage some of the men died. They frequently thought themselves lost. Finally they reached the Cape of Hermæum, where ships put in for them. Hanno was so fatigued, so desperate, and especially so overwhelmed by the loss of the elephants, that he besought Demonades to administer poison to him, and thereby put an end to his existence. Besides, he already imagined himself stretched on his cross.

Carthage, however, was not strong enough to be indignant with him. The losses amounted to four hundred thousand nine hundred and seventy-two shekels of silver, fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-three shekels of gold, eighteen elephants, fourteen members of the Grand Council, three hundred patricians, eight thousand citizens, corn enough for three moons, considerable baggage, and all their war engines. The defection of Narr' Havas was plain. The two sieges recommenced, and now Autharitus's army extended from Tunis to Rhades. From the top of the Acropolis could be seen, over the surrounding country, wide columns of smoke ascending to the sky from the burning mansions of the patricians.

One man only had the power to save the Republic. The Carthaginians repented that they had slighted him, and even the peace faction voted holocausts for Hamilcar's return.

The sight of the Zaïmph had utterly prostrated Salammbô. At night she believed she could hear the footsteps of the goddess, and would awake terrified and screaming. Every day she sent food to the temples. Taanach was wearied executing her orders, and Schahabarim left her no more.



VII: HAMILCAR

BARCA



ONE morning the Announcer-of-the-Moons, who nightly signaled the heavenly movements by trumpet blasts from the summit of the temple of Eschmoûn, saw in the west what appeared to be a bird, skimming its long wings over the surface of the sea.

It was a ship with three tiers of oars, the prow ending in a sculptured horse. The sun rose; the Announcer-of-the-Moons shaded his eyes, and seizing his clarion at arm's length, sent a ringing blast over Carthage.

The people issued from every house, unable to believe the announcement, and disputing amongst themselves the probability of its truth. The pier was soon crowded with the curious. Finally, Hamilcar's trireme was recognized by all.

The vessel advanced in proud and haughty fashion, her yard perfectly straight, her sail bulging the entire length of the mast. Cleaving the foam about her, her gigantic oars struck the water in cadence. From time to time the extremity of her keel, formed like a ploughshare, was seen as she plunged; and under the beak at the end of the prow, the sculptured horse with ivory head, rearing both its feet, seemed to course over the plains of the sea.

Rounding the promontory, her sail fell as the wind had ceased; and now, near the pilot, could be distinguished a man standing bare-headed. It was the Suffete Hamilcar himself! At his sides he wore shining plates of steel; a red mantle, attached to his shoulders, exposed his arms; two very long pearls hung from his ears, and his black bushy beard rested on his breast.

The galley, tossed between the rocks, coasted the mole, and the excited crowd followed her along on the flag-stones, shouting:

“Welcome! Greeting! Eye of Khamoûn! Oh, deliver us! It is the fault of the Rich! They desire your death! Guard yourself, Barca!”

He made no response, as if the clamour of the oceans and the din of battles had completely deafened him. But as the vessel came under the stairway which descended from the Acropolis, Hamilcar raised his head, crossed his arms, and looked at the temple of Eschmoûn. He gazed still higher, up into the dome of the pure sky, and in a harsh tone cried out an order to his sailors. The trireme bounded through the water. She grazed the idol set up at the corner of the pier to ward off storms; and into the merchant port, full of filth, splinters of wood, and fruit-rinds, she crowded, ripping open the sides of vessels moored to piles ending in crocodiles' jaws.

The people hastened to follow the ship. Some excitedly plunged into the water and swam alongside of her. Soon the galley reached the head of the port, before the formidable gate, bristling with spikes. The gate lifted, to allow the trireme to pass, and it vanished under the deep vault.

The Military Harbour was completely separated from the town, and when ambassadors came, they were obliged to enter between two walls into a passage emerging to the left in front of the temple of Khamoûn. This large basin of water was round, like a cup, and surrounded by quays, where docks were built to shelter vessels. Before each dock were two columns, bearing on their capitals the horns of Ammon, which formed a continuous portico all around the basin. In the centre, on an isle, was a house for the Suffete of the sea. The water was so limpid

that the bottom of the basin, paved with white shells, was visible.

The noise from the streets did not penetrate thus far, and Hamilcar, in passing, recognised the triremes which he had formerly commanded. There now remained scarcely twenty vessels in shelter on the shore—leaning over on their sides, or straight on their keels, with their poops high in the air, displaying their bulging prows covered with gilding and mystic symbols. The chimeras had lost their wings, the Patæcian gods their arms, the bulls their silver horns; yet all, though half defaced, inert, and rotten, were full of associations, and still exhaled the aroma of past voyages; now, like disabled soldiers who again meet their old commander, these old vessels seemed to say to him:

“Here we are! ’Tis we! And you also—you are vanquished!”

No one excepting the marine Suffete had the right to enter the house of the admiralty. Until proof of his death was certainly established, he was always considered to be alive. By this observance the Elders avoided an additional master. Hence, despite their disaffection toward Hamilcar, they had not failed to respect the custom.

The Suffete entered the deserted apartments, at every step recognising armour, furniture, and familiar objects, all of which, however, astonished him; and in the vestibule there even remained in a pan the ashes of the perfumes burned at the time of his departure, as an offering to conjure Melkarth. It was not thus that he had hoped to return! All that he had done and that he had seen—the assaults, the incendiary fires, the legions, the tempests—came back to his mind: Drepanum, Syracuse, Lilybreum, Mount Etna, the plateau of Eryx, his five years of battle, till the fatal day when, laying down their arms, they had lost Sicily. Once more he saw the citron-woods, the herdsmen tending their goats on the grey mountains, and his heart beat wildly at the thought of another Carthage established down yonder. His projects and his memories buzzed in his brain, yet dizzy from the pitching of the vessel. Overwhelming anguish

seized him, and suddenly recognizing his weakness, he felt the need of drawing closer to the gods.

So he ascended to the highest story of his mansion; then, after withdrawing a spatula studded with nails from a gold shell dangling from his arm, he opened the door of a small oval room.

The narrow black discs, set in the walls, were as transparent as glass, and admitted a soft light. Between these regular rows of discs, hollows were made like the niches used for urns in a *columbarium*. Each contained a round, dark-coloured stone, apparently very heavy. Only people of deep understanding honoured these *abaddirs*, fallen from the moon. By their fall these stones signified the planets, the sky, the fire; by their colour, the darkness of night; and by their density, the cohesion of terrestrial things. A stifling atmosphere filled this mystic place. The round stones in the niches were slightly whitened by the sea-sand, which the wind had driven through the door. Hamilcar counted them, one by one, touching each with the tip of his finger; then, hiding his face under a saffron-coloured veil, fell upon his knees and, with outstretched arms, lay prone on the ground.

Outside, the daylight struck against the laths of the black lattices; in their diaphanous thickness shrubberies, hillocks, whirlwinds, and indistinct outlines of animals were discerned. Within, the light entered, fearful and yet peaceful, as it must be behind the sun in the gloomy spaces of future creations. Hamilcar endeavoured to banish from his thoughts all the forms, symbols, and appellations of the gods, in order better to grasp the immutable spirit which these appearances concealed. Something of the planetary life penetrated his being, causing him to feel for death, and all dangers, a disdain intimate and personal. When he arose he experienced a serene intrepidity, indifferent alike to mercy or fear; and feeling half-suffocated he ascended to the top of the tower overlooking Carthage.

The city descended in a sweeping curve, with her cupolas, temples, golden roofs, mansions, clumps of palms, and here and there glass globes, from which lights sparkled; and surround-

ing this horn of plenty opening out toward him was the gigantic border of the ramparts. Below, he could see the harbours, the squares, the interior of the courts, and the outlines of the streets; and from this height men appeared as mites, and almost level with the pavement. "Ah! if Hanno had not arrived too late on the morning of the battle of the Ægatian islands!" Thus thinking, he turned his eyes to the extreme horizon, extending his arms tremblingly toward Rome.

A multitude thronged the steps of the Acropolis. In the square of Khamoûn people jostled each other waiting to see the Suffete; the terraces gradually became thronged with eager gazers, some of whom recognized and saluted him. In order, however, to rouse their impatience more effectually, he withdrew from sight.

In the hall below Hamilcar found the most important men of his party awaiting him—Istatten, Subeldia, Hictamon, Yeoubas, and others. They recounted to him all that had happened since the conclusion of peace—the cupidity of the Elders; the departure and subsequent return of the soldiers; their demands; the capture of Gisco; the rape of the Zaïmph; the succour, and subsequent desertion, of Utica; but not one ventured to tell him of the events which concerned him personally. Finally they separated, to meet again that night at the Assembly of Elders in the temple of Moloch.

The deputation had but just gone, when a tumult was heard outside the gate. Someone attempted to enter, in spite of the servants' protests; and as the uproar redoubled Hamilcar ordered that the unknown person should be shown in.

An old Negress appeared, broken, wrinkled, trembling in a stupid manner, and enveloped to her heels in wide blue veils. She came forward, facing the Suffete. They looked at one another for some moments. Suddenly Hamilcar started; at a gesture of his hand his slaves withdrew; and he signed to the Negress to move with caution, drawing her by the arm to a distant room.

She threw herself on the floor to kiss Hamilcar's feet; roughly raising her, he asked:

"Where have you left him, Iddibal?"

"Away down there, master!"

Throwing aside the veils, she rubbed the black from her face with one of the sleeves of her tunic; the senile, trembling, stooping figure was transformed, revealing a robust old man, whose skin seemed somewhat tanned by sand, wind, and sea. A tuft of white hair stood up on the crown of his head, like a bird's aigrette. With an ironical glance he pointed to the discarded disguise on the floor.

"You have done well, Iddibal. It is well!" Then, with a piercing look, Hamilcar added, "Does anyone yet suspect?"

The old man swore by the Kabiri that the secret had not been divulged. They never left their cabin, which was three days from Hadrumentum; the shores were peopled with tortoises, and the dunes were covered with palm trees. "And, obedient to your commands, master, I am teaching him to hurl javelins, and to manage teams."

"He is strong, is he not?"

"Yes, master, and intrepid, also; he fears neither serpents, nor thunder, nor phantoms. He runs barefooted, like a herdsman, on the very brink of the precipices."

"Go on! Go on!"

"He invents snares to capture wild beasts. The other moon—would you believe it?—he surprised an eagle. He clutched it; and the blood of both child and struggling bird splattered through the air in large drops, like the wind-driven roses. The furious bird enveloped him with the beating of its strong wings; but the dauntless boy seized it more firmly, and clasped it against his chest; and, in proportion as its death agony increased, his laughter redoubled, till it rung out glorious, like the clash of swords."

Hamilcar lowered his head, dazzled by these presages of greatness.

"But for some days he has been restless and agitated. He watches the far-off sails passing by at sea; he is melancholy and refuses his food! He asks questions about the gods, and he desires to know Carthage."

"No! no! not yet!" exclaimed the Suffete.

The old slave seemed to understand the peril that frightened Hamilcar, and continued:

"But how is he to be restrained? Already he has made me promise; and I should not have come to Carthage except to buy him a dagger with a silver handle, encircled by pearls."

Then the slave described how, having espied the Suffete on the terrace, he had managed to pass the guards of the harbour in the guise of one of Salammbô's women, in order to reach his master's presence.

Hamilcar remained a long time lost in meditation. At last he said:

"To-morrow, at sunset, present yourself at Megara, behind the purple factory, and imitate a jackal cry three times. If you do not see me, the first day of each moon you are to return to Carthage. Forget nothing! Cherish him! You may speak to him now of Hamilcar."

The slave resumed his disguise, and they left the house and the harbour together. Hamilcar continued his way on foot without an escort, as the conferences of the Elders were, on all extraordinary occasions, secret, and attended mysteriously.

At first he skirted the eastern face of the Acropolis, then passed by, in succession, the vegetable-market, the galleries of Kiniso, and the suburb of the perfumers. The scattered lights were being extinguished; silence settled on the wider streets, and shadowy forms gliding through the darkness followed him: others came up—all, like him, directing their steps toward the Mappalian district.

The Temple of Moloch stood at the foot of a steep gorge, in a sinister spot. From below only the high walls could be perceived, rising indefinitely, like the sides of an immense tomb. The night was sombre; a grey fog seemed to weigh upon the sea waves, as they beat against the cliffs, with a sobbing and moaning like a death rattle; and the human shadows gradually disappeared, as if they had glided through the walls.

Just beyond the entrance was a vast quadrangular court, bordered by arcades; in the centre rose a massive structure, with

eight equal sides. Cupolas surmounted it, ranged around the second story, which supported a form or rotunda, from which sprang a cone with a returning curve, terminating on the summit in a ball.

In filigree cylinders, fastened on standards and borne by men, fires burned. These lights flickered in the gusts of wind, and reddened the golden combs holding the braided tresses at the nape of the servants' necks. They ran forward, calling to each other to receive the Elders.

Here and there on the flags enormous lions crouched like sphinxes—the living symbols of the Sun, the Devourer. They dozed with half-closed eyes; but, roused by the tramp of feet and sound of voices, they slowly rose and approached the Elders, whom they recognized by their costumes; they rubbed against their thighs, arching their backs, and yawning noisily, and the vapour of their breaths passed like mist across the flames of the torches. The excitement increased; the gates were closed; all the priests fled, and the Elders disappeared under the columns, which formed a deep vestibule around the temple.

These columns were arranged in a manner to reproduce in circular ranges, comprised one within another, the Saturnian period, containing the years, the months within the years, and the days within the months—finally reaching to the walls of the sanctuary.

In this vestibule the Elders laid aside their narwhal tusk staves—as a law, which was always observed, punished with death anyone who entered a session with any weapon. At the hem of their robes many displayed a rent mended by a strip of purple braid, as evidence that they were too preoccupied mourning their relatives to bestow time in the arrangement of their clothing; and this testimony of their bereavement prevented the rent from enlarging. Others, as a sign of mourning, enclosed their beards in a small bag of violet-coloured skin, attached by two cords to their ears.

Their first act on assembling was to embrace one another, breast to breast. They surrounded Hamilcar, showering felicita-

tions upon him; they appeared like brothers meeting a brother again.

The majority were thick-set, with hooked noses, resembling the Assyrian Colossi; some, by their projecting cheek-bones, their greater height, and narrow feet, betrayed an African origin and Nomad ancestors. Those who lived constantly in their counting-houses had pale faces; others retained the marks of desert ardours, and strange jewels sparkled on all their fingers, tanned by unknown suns. The navigators were distinguished by their rolling gait, and the agriculturists carried the odours of wine-presses, dried grasses, and the sweat of mules. These old pirates had farms under tillage; these money-makers equipped vessels; and these proprietors of plantations kept slaves who followed various trades. All were learned in the religious disciplines, expert in stratagems, unmerciful and rich. Protracted cares had imparted to them an air of weariness; their flaming eyes expressed defiance, and the habit of travel, and of lying, and of trading, and of command, gave to their persons an aspect of cunning and violence—a sort of circumspect and calculated brutality. Besides, the influence of Moloch made them solemn.

At first they walked through a long, vaulted hall shaped like an egg. Seven doors, corresponding to the seven planets, displayed against the wall seven squares of different colours. After passing through the long room, they entered another similar hall, in which, at the far end, was a lighted candelabrum, covered with chased flowers, and each one of its eight golden branches bore in a chalice of diamonds a wick of byssus. This candelabrum was placed on the last of the long steps leading to a grand altar, terminating at the corners in brazen horns. Two lateral stairways led up to its flattened summit, where the stones were covered under a mountain of accumulated ashes. Something indistinct smouldered slowly upon it. Then beyond, higher than the candelabrum, and even higher than the altar, towered up the iron Moloch with his man's breast, in which yawned seven apertures; his wings stretched out over the walls; his tapering hands reached to the floor; three black stones, en-

circled in yellow, represented three eyeballs in his forehead; and his bull's head was raised, by a terrible effort, as if to bellow.

All around the hall were ebony benches; behind each was a bronze standard, which rested on three claws, and supported a torch. All these lights were reflected in the polished surface of the mother-of-pearl lozenges paving the hall. The room was so lofty that the red walls, as they neared the dome, appeared black, and the three eyes of the idol far above seemed like stars half lost in the night.

The Elders sat on the ebony benches, having thrown over their heads the trains of their long robes. They remained motionless, with their hands crossed in their wide sleeves; and the mother-of-pearl pavement was like a luminous stream, running under their bare feet from the altar towards the door.

In the centre the four pontiffs sat back to back on four ivory chairs, forming a cross: the pontiff of Eschmoûn robed in hyacinth, the pontiff of Tanit in a white linen robe, the pontiff of Khamoûn in a reddish woollen garment, and the pontiff of Moloch in purple.

Hamilcar walked forward to the candelabrum and, making a circuit of it, examined the burning wicks, then threw upon them a scented powder. Instantly violet flames sprang up at the extremities of the branches.

Then a shrill voice was raised, another responded, and the hundred Elders, the four pontiffs, and Hamilcar, all standing, intoned a hymn, always repeating the same syllables and steadily increasing the volume of sound; their voices continued to rise until they became terrible, when, simultaneously, all were silent.

There was a brief pause. Finally Hamilcar drew from his breast a small three-headed statuette, blue as a sapphire, and placed it before him. It was the image of Truth, the very genius of his speech. He replaced it in his breast, and all, as though seized by a sudden fury, screamed out: "These Barbarians are your good friends! Traitor! Wretch! You have come to see us perish, have you not? . . . Let him speak! . . . No! No! . . ."

They were revenging themselves for the constraint which had been imposed on them by the official ceremony; and though they had longed for the return of Hamilcar, they were now indignant that he had not prevented their disasters, or, rather, that he also had not suffered under them, like themselves.

As soon as the tumult was calmed, the pontiff of Moloch arose, saying:

"Explain why you have not returned to Carthage before."

"What is that to you?" disdainfully responded the Suffete.

Their outcries redoubled.

"Of what do you accuse me? Perhaps, that I have conducted the war badly? You have seen the ordinances of my battles, you who conveniently leave to the Barbarians . . ."

"Enough! Enough!" they yelled.

He continued in a deep voice, to make himself better heard: "Oh, that is true! I deceive myself! Lights of the Baal. Here in your midst are braves! Gisco, rise!" And, moving before the altar step, half-closing his eyes, seemingly in search of someone, he repeated: "Rise up, Gisco! You can accuse me; they will support you! But where is he?" Then, pausing as though to remind himself: "Ah! in his dwelling, without doubt. Surrounded by his sons, commanding his slaves, happy, and enumerating on the walls the necklaces of honour that his country has conferred upon him!"

They stirred, shrugging their shoulders, as if lashed with thongs.

"You do not even know whether he is dead or alive!" And, without heeding their clamour, he told them that in abandoning the Suffete they had deserted the Republic. Likewise that the treaty of peace with Rome, advantageous though they thought it was, was more fatal than twenty battles. Some—the least wealthy of the Council, who were always suspected to incline toward the people or toward tyranny—applauded. Their adversaries, the chiefs of the Syssites and administrators, triumphed over them by force of numbers; the most important had gathered near Hanno, who sat at the other end of the hall before the high door, that was closed by a hyacinth tapestry.

The ulcers on Hanno's face were covered with paint; the gold-powder from his hair had fallen upon his shoulders, where it made two brilliant patches; and his hair appeared white, fine, and crinkled, like lamb's wool. His hands were wrapped in linen bandages saturated with perfumed grease, that trickled down and dropped on the pavement; and his disease seemed considerably worse, for his eyes were so covered by the folds of his eyelids that, in order to see, he was compelled to tip his head backwards.

His partisans urged him to speak. At length he said, in a harsh, hideous voice: "Less arrogance, Barca! We have all been conquered! Each one bears his own misfortune; therefore be resigned!"

"Inform us, rather," Hamilcar smilingly said, "how you steered your galleys into the Roman fleet?"

"I was driven by the wind," responded Hanno.

"You are like the rhinoceros, who treads in his own dung; you expose your own folly! Be silent!" and they began mutual recriminations respecting the battle of the islands of Ægates. Hanno accused Hamilcar of not having come to join forces with him.

"But that would have entailed leaving Eryx. You should have stood out from the coast. What prevented you? Oh! I forgot—the elephants are afraid of the sea!"

Hamilcar's partisans found this jest so good that they laughed heartily; the dome of the temple re-echoed as to the beating of drums.

Hanno denounced the indignity of such an outrage, protesting that his malady had attacked him as the result of a chill during the siege of Hecatompylus; and the tears coursed down his face as winter rain over a ruined wall.

Hamilcar continued: "If you had loved me as much as you do that man, there would to-day be great joy in Carthage! How many times have I not implored you for aid, and you have always refused to give me money!"

"We needed it here," said the chief of the Syssites.

"And when my affairs were desperate—for we have been

compelled to drink the urine of our mules, and have eaten the thongs of our sandals; when I fairly longed that the blades of grass were soldiers, or that I could form battalions with our rotting dead—you called back the vessels yet remaining with me!”

“We could not risk everything,” interrupted Baat-Baal, owner of gold mines in Darytian-Gaetulia.

“And now, what have you done here in Carthage, in your dwellings, behind your walls? There were the Gauls on the Eridanus that should have been stirred; the Canaanites at Cyrene, who would have come to our help; and while the Romans were sending ambassadors to Ptolemy . . .”

“He lauds the Romans to us now!” someone cried out. “How much have they paid you to defend them?”

“Ask that of the plains of Bruttium, of the ruins of Locri, Metapontum, and Heraclea! I have burned all their trees, have robbed all their temples, and even to the death of the grandsons of their grandsons. . . .”

“Truly, you declaim like an orator!” interrupted Kapouras, an illustrious merchant. “What is it you want?”

“I say that you must be more ingenious, or more formidable! If all Africa rejects your yoke, it will be because you do not know how to fasten it on her shoulders—feeble masters that you are! Agathocles, Regulus, Cœpio, any of the daring men, have only to land in order to capture the Republic; and when the Libyans in the east combine with the Numidians in the west, and the Nomads shall have come from the south, and the Romans from the north . . .”

A cry of horror burst out.

“Oh! you will strike your breasts, roll in the dust, and tear your mantles! What matter? You will be forced to turn the millstones in Suburra, and gather grapes on the hills of Latium.”

They struck their right thighs to show their indignation, and the sleeves of their robes rose like the wings of frightened birds. Hamilcar, carried away by an inspiration, continued in the same strain as he stood alone on the topmost step of the

altar, quivering with terrible emotion. He raised his arms, and the rays from the candelabrum burning behind him, passed in streaks between his fingers, like javelins of gold.

"You will lose your vessels, your fields, your chariots, your suspended couches, and the slaves who rub your feet! The jackals will make their lairs in your palaces, the plough pass over your tombs; all that will remain will be the cry of the eagles and a heap of ruins! Carthage, thou shalt fall!"

The four pontiffs threw out their hands to ward off this anathema. All had risen; but the Suffete of the sea was a sacerdotal magistrate under the protection of the sun and inviolable, so long as the assembly of the Rich had not judged him. Terror was connected with the altar on which he stood. They drew back.

Hamilcar said no more. With eyes fixed and face as pale as the pearls in his tiara, he panted, almost terrified at himself, and his spirit lost in dismal visions. From the height on which he stood, the torches on the bronze standards appeared to him to be a vast crown of fire laid flat on the pavement, from which a black smoke escaped and rolled up through the darkness of the dome. The intensity of the silence for some moments was such that the distant roar of the sea could be plainly heard.

Then the Elders took counsel among themselves. Their interests, their very existence, were attacked by the Barbarians. But they could not conquer them without the Suffete's aid; and despite their pride this fact made them overlook every other. They called his friends aside, and in a parley made reconciliations, understandings, and promises. Hamilcar protested that he no longer desired any command. All implored him to reconsider his decision. When the word treason escaped their lips, he was angry, retorting that the only traitor to Carthage was the Grand Council. The engagements with the soldiers expired with the war, hence they became free as soon as the war ended. He even extolled their bravery, and depicted all the advantages that would accrue if the soldiers could be permanently attached to the Republic by donations and privileges.

At this, Magdassan, an old provincial governor, rolling his yellow eyes, said:

"Truly, Barca, travel has made you a Greek, a Latin, and I know not what else! Why do you talk of advantages for these men? Better let ten thousand Barbarians perish than one of us."

The Elders nodded their approval, and murmured: "Yes; why trouble on that score? We can always get Mercenaries when needed."

"Yes, and you can easily get rid of them, is it not so? Abandon them, as you did in Sardinia. Advise the enemy the road they must take, as was done for those Gauls in Sicily, or else debark them in the open sea. While returning, I saw the rocks white with their bones!" retorted Hamilcar.

"What a pity!" impudently ejaculated Kapouras.

"Have they not gone over a hundred times to the enemy?" exclaimed others.

"Why, then," answered Hamilcar, "notwithstanding your laws, have you recalled them to Carthage? And why, when once here in your city, poor and numerous amidst your wealth, did you not think to weaken them by some division? You dismissed them with their women and children—without keeping a single hostage! Did you imagine that they would assassinate each other and spare you the annoyance of fulfilling your pledges? You hate them because they are strong! You hate me even more, because I am their master! Oh! I just now felt, when you kissed my hands, that you all restrained yourselves with difficulty from biting them!"

If the sleeping lions had entered at this moment from the outer court, howling wildly, the uproar could not have been more awful. But the pontiff of Eschmoûn rose, and with his knees tightly pressed together, his elbows straight, and hands half open, said:

"Barca, Carthage requests you to take the general command of the Punic forces against the Barbarians!"

"I refuse!" replied Hamilcar.

"We will give you full authority," screamed out the chiefs of the Syssites.

"No!"

"Without any control! Without division! All the money that you want! All the captives, all the booty, fifty zerets of land for each enemy's corpse."

"No! no! Victory with you is impossible!"

"He is afraid!"

"Because you are cowards, avaricious, ungrateful, pusillanimous, and fools!"

"He makes terms with the enemies! To put himself at their head," cried out some.

"And return against us," screamed others.

And from the end of the hall Hanno yelled, "He wishes to be king!"

Then they all jumped up, overturning the benches and torches, and pressed in a crowd toward the altar, brandishing daggers. Hamilcar, reaching into his sleeves, drew forth two large cutlasses. Bending forward with his left foot advanced, he confronted and defied them all, as, with flashing eyes he stood immovable under the golden candelabrum.

Thus, as a precaution, every member of the conference had carried concealed weapons into the temple: it was a crime; they looked at one another with guilty terror. As all were culpable, each became quickly reassured, and gradually turned his back to the Suffete, retreating to the body of the hall, enraged and humiliated. For the second time they had recoiled before Hamilcar. They remained for some moments standing. Some, who had carelessly wounded their fingers, held them in their mouths, or rolled them up gently in the ends of their mantles, and, as they were dispersing, Hamilcar heard these words:

"It is a matter of delicacy. He does not wish to afflict his daughter!"

A voice, in a louder tone, answered: "Doubtless, since she takes her lovers from amongst the Mercenaries!"

At first he staggered; then his eyes searched rapidly over the throng for Schahabarim. The pontiff of Tanit alone had remained seated. Hamilcar could only perceive in the distance his tall cap. All sneered at the Suffete to his very face, and, as

his agony increased, their joy redoubled, while amid the confused yells he could hear those who were last to depart, screaming back at him:

"He was seen leaving her bed-chamber!"

"One morning in the month of Tammouz!"

"He is the thief of the Zaïmph!"

"A very handsome man!"

"Taller than Hamilcar!"

At this he jerked off his tiara, the badge of his dignity—his tiara of eight mystic rows, with an emerald shell in the centre—and with both hands dashed it fiercely to the ground. The gold circles broke and rebounded, and the pearls rang out on the pavement. On his pale forehead now appeared a long scar that moved like a serpent between his eyebrows; his limbs trembled; he went up one of the lateral stairways leading to the altar, and stepped on the top. It was to consecrate himself to the gods by offering himself as a holocaust. The movement of his flowing mantle fluttered the lights of the candelabrum, which was lower than his sandals, and by his steps raised a fine dust that floated about him like a cloud, as high as his waist. He stopped between the legs of the brass colossus, took up two handfuls of the ashes, the very sight of which alone made all the Carthaginians tremble with terror, and said:

"By the hundred torches of your Intelligences! By the eight fires of the Kabiri! By the stars! By the meteors! And by the volcanoes! By all that which burns! By the thirst of the desert! By the saltiness of the Ocean! By the cavern of Hadrumetum, the realm of Souls! By extermination! By the ashes of your sons, and the ashes of the brothers of your ancestors, with which I now commingle my own! You, the hundred Councilors of Carthage, have lied in accusing my daughter! And I, Hamilcar Barca, Suffete of the sea, Chief of the Rich and Ruler of the people, before Moloch with the bull's head, I swear . . ." They waited for something awful; but he resumed in a much louder and calmed voice—"that I will not even speak of it to her!"

The sacred servitors, wearing golden combs, entered, some

carrying sponges of purple, and others palm branches. They raised the hyacinth curtain spread before the doorway, and through the opening was visible at the end of the other halls the vast rose-coloured sky, which seemed to be but a continuation of the temple's vault, and to rest at the horizon upon the blue sea.

The sun was rising from the billows, striking in full radiance against the breast of the brazen idol, which was divided into seven compartments, closed by gratings. Moloch's jaws, revealing his red teeth, opened in a horrible yawn; his enormous nostrils were dilated; the broad daylight seemed to animate and impart to him a terrible air of impatience, as if he would have liked to bound outside to mix with the sun and the god, and speed with him through the immensities of space.

Meanwhile the still burning torches, scattered on the mother-of-pearl pavement, gleamed like splashes of blood.

The Elders reeled from exhaustion, and filled their lungs with long inhalations of fresh air; perspiration ran down their livid faces; their fierce outcries had left them almost voiceless; but their wrath against the Suffete had not subsided, and their adieux were parting threats, to which Hamilcar responded.

"To-morrow night, Barca, in the temple of Eschmoûn!"

"I shall be there——!"

"We will have you condemned by the Rich!"

"And I you by the people!"

"Be warned, lest you end on a cross!"

"And you, that you are not torn in the streets!"

As soon as they reached the threshold of the court they resumed a calm deportment.

Their runners and charioteers awaited them at the gate. Most departed on white she-mules. The Suffete sprang into his chariot, taking the reins himself; the two horses arched their necks, rhythmically spurned the stones, which rebounded under their hoofs, and ascended the entire length of the Mappalian Way at such a fleet gallop that the silver vulture on the end of the pole seemed to fly as the chariot swept past.

The road crossed a field set with long stones which had pointed pyramidal tops; on each was carved an open hand, as if the dead reposing beneath had reached out of their tombs toward heaven to claim something. Further along were scattered cone-shaped cabins, built of clay, branches, and reed wattles. Little stone walls, runnels of water, esparto ropes, and hedges of cactus irregularly separated these habitations, which became denser as the road approached the Suffete's gardens.

But Hamilcar kept his eyes fixed on a large tower of three stories, forming three enormous cylinders, the first built of stone, the second of brick, and the third entirely of cedar, supporting a copper cupola on twenty-four juniper columns, over which fell like garlands the interlacings of slender brass chainlets. This lofty edifice overlooked the buildings that extended to the right, consisting of the warehouses and counting house, while the palace of the women loomed up at the end of the avenue of cypresses, which stood in line like two bronze walls.

When the rumbling chariot had entered through the narrow gate, it halted under a wide shed, where horses were fastened feeding from heaps of cut grass.

All the servants ran forward. They were indeed a host; for those who worked in the adjacent country in terror of the soldiers had fled to Carthage. The farm labourers, clothed in animals' skins, dragged behind them chains riveted to their ankles; the workers in the purple dye factories had arms stained red as those of executioners; the sailors wore green caps; the fishermen coral necklaces; the hunters bore a net across their shoulders, and the people of Megara wore white or black tunics, leather breeches, and skull-caps of straw, felt, or linen, according to their different services and trades.

Behind pressed a populace in rags, who lived without employment, far from the dwelling houses, sleeping on the ground, sheltered only by the trees in the gardens, eating the scraps from the kitchens—human excrescences vegetating in the shadow of the palace. Hamilcar tolerated them from prudence, even more than from disdain. Many of them had never

before seen the Suffete, but all, as a sign of their joy, wore flowers in their ears.

Men, with head-dresses like sphinxes, carrying large clubs, brandished them about in the crowd, striking right and left to keep back the slaves over-curious to see their master, so that he might not be inconvenienced by their numbers or offended by their smell.

Then they all threw themselves flat on the ground, crying out: "Eye of Baal! May your house flourish forever!" and between the men thus prostrated in the avenue of cypresses, the intendant of the intendants, Abdalonim, wearing a white mitre, advanced toward Hamilcar, carrying a censer in his hand.

Salammbô descended the stairway of the galleys. All her slave-women followed her, and at each step she advanced they also descended. The heads of the Negresses made large black spots amid the bands of golden plaques which bound the foreheads of the Roman women. Others wore in their hair silver arrows, emerald butterflies, or long pins spreading like the rays of the sun. Over the confusion of their white, yellow, and blue garments, their fringes, agraffes, necklaces, rings, and bracelets glittered. The robes rustled, and the clattering of sandals could be heard, accompanied by the dull sound of naked feet upon wood. Here and there a tall eunuch, whose shoulders overtopped the women, smiled with uplifted face. As soon as the acclamations of the men were quieted, the women, hiding their faces in the sleeves of their dresses, uttered in unison a strange cry, like the howl of the she-wolf, so furious and strident that it seemed to make the grand ebony stairway, now covered with women, vibrate like a lyre from top to bottom.

The wind fluttered their long veils and gently waved the slender papyrus stems. It was the month of *Schebaz*, and the depth of winter; the pomegranate trees, at this season in flower, stood out against the azure sky; through the branches the sea appeared, with an island in the distance, half lost in the mist.

Hamilcar paused when he perceived Salammbô.

Born after the death of several male children, she had not

been welcomed, for the birth of a daughter was a calamity according to the religions of the Sun. The gods had given him a son later; but he never forgot his blighted hopes, and the shock of the malediction he had pronounced against her. Meanwhile Salammô continued to advance.

Pearls of various colours fell in long clusters from her ears over her shoulders, down to her elbows; her hair was crimped to simulate a cloud. Around her neck she wore small quadrangular gold plaques representing a woman between two lions rampant, and her costume reproduced completely the attire of the goddess Tanit. Her hyacinth robe, with flowing sleeves, drawn tightly in at the waist, widened out at the bottom. The vermilion of her lips made her pearly teeth even whiter than they actually were; the antimony on her eyelids lengthened her eyes and made them almond shape. Her sandals, made of a bird's plumage, had very high heels. She was extraordinarily pale, doubtless because of the cold.

At length she arrived before Hamilcar, and, without looking up or raising her head, she addressed him, saying: "All hail, Eye of Baalim! Eternal glory! Triumph! Contentment! Peace! Wealth! A long time has my heart been sad, and the household languished, but the master who returns is like Tam-muz restored to life; and under thy gaze, O father, joyousness and a new existence will expand over all!"

And taking from Taanach's hand a little oblong vase, in which fumed a mixture of meal, butter, cardamon, and wine, she continued: "Drink a full draught of the welcome cup prepared by thy servant."

"Benediction on thee!" he replied, mechanically grasping the golden vase she proffered to him.

All the while he examined her with a scrutiny so keen that Salammô, troubled thereat, stammered out:

"Thou hast been told, O master! . . ."

"Yes! I know!" answered Hamilcar, in a low voice. Was this a confession? Or was she alluding to the Barbarians? And he added a few vague words concerning the public embarrassment that he himself hoped now to dispel.



"MERCY!"

“O father!” exclaimed Salammbô, “thou canst never repair that which is irreparable!”

At this he started back, and Salammbô was astonished at his amazement, as she did not dream of Carthage, but of the sacrilege in which she felt herself involved. This man, who made legions tremble, and whom she scarcely knew, frightened her like a god. He had divined it; he knew all; something terrible was about to befall her; she cried out—“Mercy!”

Hamilcar lowered his head slowly. Disposed as Salammbô was to accuse herself, she dared not now open her lips, though she was almost suffocated with the desire to complain to, and be comforted by, her father. Hamilcar struggled against his inclination to break his oath. However, he kept it from pride, or through dread of putting an end to his uncertainty, and scanned her full in the face, trying with all his might to discover what she hid at the bottom of her heart.

Salammbô, panting, buried her head gradually in her bosom, crushed by his austere scrutiny. He was now sure that she had yielded to the embrace of a Barbarian. He shuddered, lifting both his fists over her. She shrieked and fell back among her women, who eagerly pressed about her.

Hamilcar turned on his heel, followed by all of his attendants. The door of the warehouses was thrown open, and he entered into a vast, round hall, whence long passages led like the spokes of a wheel from its hub into other halls. A stone disc stood in the centre, surrounded by a railing for holding the cushions that were heaped upon the carpets. The Suffete walked with long, rapid strides, breathing heavily, striking the ground sharply with his heels. He drew his hand across his forehead as though tormented by flies; then he shook his head; and as he perceived the accumulation of his wealth he became calmer. His thoughts were attracted to the perspective of the passages and to the adjoining halls filled with the rarest treasures. Therein were amassed bronze plates, ingots of silver, and pigs of iron alternating with blocks of tin brought from the Cassiterides, by way of the Shadowy Sea; gums from the countries of the Blacks overflowed their sacks of palm-bark; and gold

dust, heaped in leather bottles, imperceptibly filtered through the worn seams; delicate filaments, drawn from marine plants, hung amid the flax from Egypt, Greece, Taprobane, and Judea. Madrepores, as broad as bushes, bristled at the base of the walls, and an indefinable odour floated about, evidently proceeding from the abundant store of perfumes, spices, hides, and ostrich plumes, tied in large bunches at the very top of the roof. At the entrance to each passage elephants' tusks stood, joined at the points, forming an arch above the doorway.

Finally, he mounted the stone disc. All the intendants stood with their arms crossed and heads bent, while Abdalonim lifted his pointed mitre with a regal air.

Hamilcar questioned the Chief of the Ships. He was an old pilot, with eyelids reddened by the wind; his white locks fell to his hips, as if the foam of tempests had lingered in his beard. He answered that he had sent a fleet by Gades and Thymiamata to endeavour to reach Eziongeber by rounding the South Horn and the promontory of Aromata.

Other vessels had sailed continuously to the west during four moons, without making land; but the prows of the vessels became entangled in the weeds; the horizon resounded continually with the noise of cataracts; blood-coloured mists obscured the sun, and a breeze, laden with perfumes, put the crews to sleep, and their memories had been thereby so much affected that at present they could tell naught concerning the region. Meantime, other vessels had ascended the streams of Scythia, penetrating Colchis to the Jugrians and the Estians; had carried away from the archipelago fifteen hundred virgins; and sent to the bottom all foreign vessels navigating beyond the cape of Æstrymon, in order that the secret of the routes might not be known. King Ptolemy had kept back the incense from Schesbar, Syracuse, and Elatea. Corsica and the islands had furnished nothing. Then the old pilot dropped his voice to announce that one trireme had been taken at Rusicada by the Numidians—"For they are with them, master."

Hamilcar knitted his brows, then signed to the Chief of the Journeys to speak. This man was wrapped in a brown ungirdled

robe, and his head was bound round by a long scarf of white material, which passed over his mouth and fell back on his shoulders.

The caravans had gone out regularly at the winter equinox. But out of fifteen hundred men bound to the further Ethiopia with excellent camels, new leather bottles, and stocks of painted linen, one only had returned to Carthage; all the others had died from fatigue, or become mad through the terrors of the desert. He said that he had seen, far beyond the Black Harosch, beyond the Atarantes and the country of the big apes, immense kingdoms where even the ordinary utensils were of gold; a river the colour of milk and spreading out like the sea; forests of blue trees; hills of aromatics; monsters with human faces, vegetating on rocks, whose eyes opened like flowers to look at you; then, behind lakes covered with dragons, mountains of crystal supporting the sun. Other caravans had returned from the Indies, bringing peacocks, pepper, and some new materials. As for those who went to purchase chalcedonies, by the road of the Syrtis and the temple of Ammon, they had doubtless perished in the sands. The caravans of Gætulia and Phazana had furnished their usual supplies, but he, the Chief, did not at present dare to equip any other expeditions.

Hamilcar, comprehending by this that the Mercenaries occupied the country, moaned as he leaned on his other elbow.

The Chief of Farms, who was summoned next in order, was in such fear that he trembled violently, in spite of his thick-set shoulders and great red eyes; his flat-nosed face resembled a mastiff's, and was surmounted by a network of bark-fibres; he wore a girdle of hairy leopard skin, in which shone two formidable cutlasses.

As soon as Hamilcar turned toward him, he uttered a cry invoking all the Baals, protesting he was not to blame! He could do nothing! He had watched the temperature, the land, the stars; had made the plantations at the solstice of winter; had pruned at the wane of the moon; and had inspected the slaves, and provided them with clothing.

Hamilcar, irritated by such loquacity, clacked his tongue, and the man with the cutlasses continued in a rapid voice:

"Ah! master! They have plundered everything! sacked everything! destroyed everything! Three thousand feet of timber were cut down at Maschala, and at Ubada the granaries were broken open and the cisterns filled up! At Tedes they carried off fifteen hundred gomors of wheat; at Marazzana they killed the herdsmen, ate the flocks, and burned your house, your beautiful house of cedar beams, where you spend the summers. The slaves of Tuburbo, who reaped the barley, fled to the mountains; and of the asses, riding and working mules, the cattle of Taormina, and the antelopes, not one remains; all were taken away. It is a curse. I cannot survive it!"

He began to cry, adding: "Ah! if you only knew how full the cellars were, and how the ploughshares shone! Ah, the fine rams! Ah, the fine bulls!"

Hamilcar's rage suffocated him; he burst forth: "Be still! Am I a pauper? No lies! Speak the truth! I wish to know all that I have lost, to the last shekel, to the last cab! Abdalonim, bring me the accounts of the vessels, of the farms, of the caravans, and of my household! And if any of your consciences be not clear, sorrow on your heads! . . . Leave!"

All the attendants retired, walking backward, touching their fingers to the ground.

From the midst of a nest of pigeon-holes in the wall, Abdalonim took the accounts, which were kept on knotted cords, bands of linen or of papyrus, and shoulder-blades of sheep covered with fine writing. He laid them all at Hamilcar's feet, and placed in his hands a wooden frame, strung with three interior wires on which gold, silver, and horn balls were strung, and began:

"One hundred and ninety-two houses in the Mappals, let to the new Carthaginians at the rentals of one beka per moon."

"Hold! That is too much! Be charitable to the poor. Write me the names of those whom you believe to be the most courageous, and ascertain if they are attached to the Republic. What next?"

Abdalonim hesitated, surprised by such generosity.

Hamilcar impatiently snatched from his hands the linen bands, saying, as he looked:

"What is this? Three palaces around Khamoûn at twelve kesitath per month! Raise it to twenty. I do not wish to be devoured by the Rich."

Abdalonim after a long salute resumed: "Loaned to Tigilas, until the end of the season, two kikars at thirty-three and a third per cent maritime interest; advanced to Bar-Malkarth fifteen hundred shekels on the security of thirty slaves, but twelve have died in the salt marshes."

"In other words, they were not strong," laughingly said the Suffete. "No matter! if he needs money, let him have it! One must always lend, and at different rates of interest, according to the wealth of the person."

Then the servitor hastened to read all that had been brought in by the iron mines of Annaba, the coral fisheries, the purple factories, the yield of the tax on the resident Greeks, and the exportation of silver to Arabia, where it was ten times the value of gold; then on the captures of vessels, allowing for the deduction of a tenth, being tithes for the temple of Tanit: "Each time I have declared one-fourth less, master."

Hamilcar reckoned, rattling the balls under his fingers.

"Enough! What have you paid?"

"To Stratonicles of Corinth, and three merchants of Alexandria, on the letters, which have been cashed, ten thousand Athenian drachmas and twelve Syrian talents of gold. The provisions for the crews rising to twenty minæ per month for each trireme. . . ."

"I know it! How much are the losses?"

"Here is the account on these sheets of lead," said the intendant. "With reference to the ships chartered in common, as throwing the cargoes overboard was often unavoidable, the unequal losses were divided according to the number of partners. For ropes borrowed from the arsenals which it has been impossible to return, the Syssites exacted eight hundred kesitath before the expedition to Utica."

"The Syssites again!" said Hamilcar, bending his head, and remaining for a while as if crushed under the weight of all the hatreds he felt levelled at him. "But I do not see here the Megara expenses."

Abdalonim turned pale, as he brought from another pigeon-hole the sycamore-wood tablets filed in bundles, and tied together with leather straps.

Hamilcar listened, curious as to the domestic details, and calmed by the monotony of the man's voice as he enumerated the accounts, while Abdalonim read slower and slower. Suddenly, letting the wooden tablets fall to the ground, he threw himself flat on his face with arms extended, in the position of one condemned.

Hamilcar, without evincing any emotion, picked up the tablets; his lips parted and his eyes opened wide as he saw charged as the expenses of a single day an exorbitant amount of meats, fish, birds, wines, and aromatics, vases broken, slaves killed, and napery destroyed.

Abdalonim, remaining prostrate, told him of the Barbarians' feast and that he had been unable to escape from obeying the commands of the Elders. Salammbô, too, had commanded that money should be lavished to receive the soldiers.

At the name of his daughter Hamilcar jumped up; then compressing his lips, he sank back amid the cushions, tearing the fringes with his nails, his eyes fixed, panting.

"Arise!" said the Suffete.

Then he descended from the dais, followed by Abdalonim, whose knees trembled. But seizing an iron bar, he went to work like a madman to unseal the pavement. A disc of wood flew out and revealed, under the entire length of the passage, numerous broad covers that concealed pits where grain was stored.

"Eye of Baal! You see by this," said the servant, trembling, "they have not taken everything! For these pits are deep, each one fifty cubits, and full to the brim! During your absence I have had similar pits dug in the arsenals and in the gardens, so that your mansion is as full of grain as your heart is of wisdom."

A smile passed over Hamilcar's face.

"It is well, Abdalonim." Afterward he whispered: "You must obtain grain from Etruria and Bruttium, and from whatever place you can and at any price. Amass it and keep it stored. It is important that I alone possess all the grain in Carthage."

Then, when they reached the end of the passage, Abdalonim, with one of the keys hanging from his girdle, opened a large quadrangular room, divided in the centre by cedar pillars. Gold, silver, and brass coins were piled on tables, or stacked in niches that extended the length of the four walls, reaching up to the beams of the roof; enormous coffers of hippopotamus hide stood in the corners, supporting rows of smaller bags; and bul-lion heaped up made hillocks on the pavement, while here and there piles too high had toppled over, appearing like columns in ruins. The large pieces of Carthaginian money, stamped on the face with a representation of Tanit and a horse under a palm tree, were mixed with those of the colonies on which were stamped the figure of a bull, a star, a globe, or a crescent. Then, disposed about in unequal amounts, were pieces of all values, and dimensions, and ages, from the ancient ones of Assyria, that were as thin as a finger-nail, to the old ones of Latium, that were thicker than a hand; there were also the buttons of Ægina, the tablets of Bactria, and the short bars of ancient Lacedæmonia. The coins were rusty, greasy with dirt; many were covered with verdigris, having been fished up out of water in nets; others were blackened by fire, having been found after sieges in the midst of ruins.

The Suffete had quickly calculated whether the present sums corresponded with the gains and losses that had just been submitted to him, and he was about proceeding when he discovered three brass jars completely empty. Abdalonim averted his head with a sign of horror, and Hamilcar resigned himself in silence.

They crossed other passages and other halls, coming at last before a door where, to guard it the better, a man was fastened about the waist to a long chain, riveted in the masonry of the wall—a Roman custom but lately introduced into Carthage. His beard and nails had grown excessively long, and he swayed

from right to left, with a continued oscillation, like that of a captive animal.

As soon as he recognised Hamilcar, he cried out: "Mercy, Eye of Baal! Pity! Kill me! It is now ten years since I have seen the sun! In the name of your father, mercy!"

Without answering him, Hamilcar clapped his hands. Three men appeared, who, with the assistance of Abdalonim, set at once to work, straining their arms in the effort to release from its ring the enormous bar securing the door. Hamilcar took a torch, and disappeared in the darkness.

This was believed to be a passage leading to the family sepulchre; but only a wide pit would have been found, which was excavated to mislead thieves, and in reality concealed nothing.

Hamilcar passed it, then, leaning down, turned aside on its rollers a very heavy millstone; there was revealed an opening through which he entered an apartment built in the form of a cone. The walls were covered with brass scales. In the centre, on a granite pedestal, was a statue of one of the Kabiri, bearing the name of Aletes, the discoverer of the mines in Celtiberia. Against the base of this statue, on the ground, were placed crosswise broad golden bucklers, and monstrous silver vases with closed necks, all of such an extravagant form as to make them useless, it being the custom to cast such quantities of metal in these objects as to render it next to impossible to embezzle or even move them.

With his torch he lighted a small miner's lamp fixed in the idol's cap. Immediately the hall was illuminated with green, yellow, blue, violet, wine and blood coloured lights; for it was filled with precious stones placed in golden calabashes hanging like sconces to brass plates, or in their native blocks ranged along at the base of the walls. Here were to be found in abundance turquoises shot away from the mountains by the swirl of a sling; carbuncles formed by lynxes' urine, tongue-like stones fallen from the moon, *tyanos*, diamonds, *sandas-trum*, beryls, the three varieties of rubies, the four species of sapphires, and the twelve kinds of emeralds. These precious stones flashed variously like splashes of milk, blue icicles, or

silver dust, and threw their rays in sheets, in beams, or like twinkling stars. The ceraunia engendered by the thunder scintillated near the chalcedonies, antidotes to poisons. There were topazes from Zabarca, effective in warding off terrors; opals from Bactria, employed to prevent abortions, and horns of Ammon, which invite dreams when placed beneath a bed.

The fantastic fires from the gems and the flames from the lamp were mirrored in the broad, gold shields. Hamilcar stood with folded arms, smiling—and he revelled less in the spectacle than in the consciousness of his riches. They were inaccessible, inexhaustible, infinite. The thought of his ancestors sleeping beneath his feet sent thrilling to his heart some conception of their eternity; he felt drawn very near to the subterranean spirits. He experienced an emotion akin to the joy of a Kabiri, and the large luminous rays, striking his face, resembled the end of an invisible net-work that crossed abysses and attached him to the centre of the world.

An idea came which made him shiver: he went behind the idol, and walked straight therefrom to the wall; he searched on his arm amid numerous tattooings, examining a horizontal line with two perpendicular lines, which in Canaanite figures expressed thirteen; then he counted to the thirteenth brass plate on the wall, when he again lifted his sleeve, and with his right hand traced on another part of his arm other lines more complicated, delicately moving his fingers as if he played upon a lyre. Finally, he struck seven blows with his thumb, at which one entire section of the wall turned around as a single block. This concealed a sort of cellar, in which were enclosed mysterious things that possessed no names, but of an incalculable value. Hamilcar descended the three steps, took from a silver vat an antelope's skin that floated in a black liquid, and then reascended.

Abdalonim then walked before him. At each step he struck the pavement with his tall staff, the handle of which was ornamented with bells, and before the door of each room cried Hamilcar's name, accompanied with praises and benedictions.

In the circular gallery, from which branched all the lobbies,

were small beams of alghum trees; piled along the walls were sacks of henna, cakes of Lemnos-earth, and tortoise-shells filled with pearls. The Suffete in passing brushed unheedingly with his robe gigantic pieces of amber, formed by the sun's rays and almost divine.

A mist of odorous vapour arose.

"Open that door!" the Suffete commanded.

They entered. Naked men were laboriously engaged kneading pulp, pressing herbs, stirring the fires, pouring oil into jars, opening and closing little oval cells excavated all around in the walls, which were so numerous that the room resembled the interior of a beehive. Myrobalans, bdellium, saffron, and violets overflowed the place, and all about were gums, powders, roots, glass phials, branches of dropwort and rose petals; the scents were stifling, in spite of the clouds from the storax that crackled in the centre on a brass tripod.

The Chief of Perfumes, pale and very tall, like a wax torch, came forward to greet Hamilcar by crushing over his hands a roll of aromatic ointment, whilst two slaves rubbed his heels with harewort leaves. The Suffete repulsed them, for they were Cyrenians of infamous morals, but valued because of their secret knowledge in concocting perfumes.

To display his vigilance, the Chief of Perfumes offered to the Suffete in an electrum spoon, a little malobalalthrum to taste; then with an awl he pierced three Indian bezoars. Hamilcar, who was familiar with the artifices of the craft, took a hornful of balm, and after holding it near the fire, spilled it on his robe, when a brown stain appeared, which proved it was adulterated. At this he looked fixedly at the Chief, and, without saying a word, threw the gazelle-horn in his face.

Indignant as he was that these adulterations should be committed to his own detriment, yet upon perceiving some packages of spikenard that were being packed for exportation to the countries beyond the seas, he ordered antimony to be added to make them heavier. Then he inquired for three boxes of *psagas* destined for his own personal use.

The Chief of Perfumes avowed that he knew nothing of

them; the soldiers had invaded the distillery with drawn knives, and coerced him by threats to open the three boxes.

"You, then, fear their wrath more than mine?" cried the Suffete, and through the fumes his eyeballs flashed like torches upon the tall, pale man, who began to comprehend the situation. "Abdalonim, before sunset have him flogged, and torture him!"

This loss, though less important than the others, had exasperated him. In spite of his efforts to banish the Barbarians from his thoughts, he was continually reminded of them. Their excesses were confused with his daughter's shame, and he was angered to think that his household knew, and had not mentioned it to him. But something impelled him to plunge deeper in his misfortune, and, taken with an inquisitorial rage, he paid visits of inspection to the hangars, behind the house of commerce, examining the stores and supplies of bitumen, wood, anchors, cordage, honey, and wax; then the magazines of fabrics, the reserves of provisions, not forgetting the marble yards and the barn of silphium.

He crossed to the opposite side of the gardens, inspecting with keen scrutiny in their cabins the domestic artisans whose productions were sold; watched the tailors as they embroidered mantles, others as they knotted the nets, and others who combed the wool for cushions or cut out sandals. He viewed the Egyptian workers polishing papyrus with a shell, as shuttles of the weavers clacked, and the armourers' anvils clanged. To these craftsmen he said: "Forge swords! Keep on forging! I shall need them." And he took from his breast the antelope skin that had been macerated in poisons, and ordered them to cut and fashion from it a breastplate for him that would be more solid than brass, and impervious alike to weapons or flames.

As soon as he approached the various workers, Abdalonim, in order to divert the Suffete's anger from himself, sought to anger him against them by disparaging their work, murmuring: "What a piece of work! It is a shame! Truly the master is too good!"

Hamilcar, without listening, went his way.

He slackened his pace, as the path was barred by large, noble trees, completely charred, such as may be seen in woods where herdsmen have camped. The roads were barricaded, the palisades were broken, the water was lost in the ditches; fragments of glass and bones of apes appeared in the midst of muddy puddles. On the bushes hung scraps of cloth, and under the citron trees there were rotten heaps of decaying flowers. The servants had neglected everything, believing that Hamilcar would never return.

At each step he discovered some new disaster, more proofs of the very thing he had forbidden himself to learn. Lo! even now, as he walked about, he soiled his purple boots, crushing under foot the very filth of the Barbarians; and yet he had not these wretches at the end of a catapult to make them fly into pieces. He experienced a sense of humiliation for having defended them in the Assembly: it was treachery and treason; but as he could not avenge himself on the soldiers, or on the Elders, or on Salammbô, or on any person, and his wrath needed some victim, he condemned to the mines all the garden slaves by a single decree.

Each time that Abdalonim saw his master approach the parks he shuddered. But Hamilcar first took the road to the mill, whence issued a most mournful *melopœia*.

Amid clouds of flour-dust turned the heavy mills, constructed of two porphyry-cones, placed one upon the other; the uppermost one was funnel-shaped and revolved as it ground the grain on the second cone by the aid of strong bars pushed by men. They held their chests and arms firmly against them, or pulled with all their might, harnessed to the bars. The friction of the breast-strap had formed purulent sores around their armpits, such as may be seen on asses' withers; and black, filthy rags, hardly covering their loins, flapped over the thighs like long tails. Their eyes were red, the shackles on their feet clattered, and they panted, heaved and tugged in unison. On their mouths were muzzles, fastened by little bronze chains, rendering it impossible for them to eat the meal; and gauntlets, made without fingers, preventing them from pilfering.

At the entrance of the Suffete the wooden bars creaked still more loudly, the grain grated in grinding. Many of these slaves, upon seeing him, fell down on their knees, while the others continued their drudgery, treading heedlessly over their kneeling companions.

The Suffete asked for Giddenem, the governor of the slaves, who appeared, displaying the dignity of his office by the richness of his costume: his tunic, which was slit at the sides, was of fine purple; heavy rings weighed down his ear lobes; and the bands of material enveloping his legs were joined by a gold lacing, like a serpent coiling around a tree, reaching from his ankles to his hips. In his hands, covered with rings, he held a string of jet beads, to identify the men subject to the accursed malady.

Hamilcar signed to him to unfasten the slaves' muzzles. With cries like famished animals, they all rushed upon the meal, burying their faces in the heaps and devouring it.

"You are wearing them out," said the Suffete.

Giddenem replied that it was necessary in order to subdue them.

"Then it was scarcely worth while sending you to the training-school for slaves at Syracuse. Summon the others."

And the cooks, butlers, grooms, runners, porters of the litters, men from the vapour-baths, and the women with their children, all ranged themselves in the gardens in a single file, from the house of commerce as far as the deer park. They all held their breaths terror-stricken, and a vast silence reigned over Megara. The sun's rays lengthened on the Lagoon below the catacombs. The peacocks began to screech. Hamilcar moved step by step in front of this long array of slaves.

"Of what use are these old slaves?" said he. "Sell them; there are too many Gauls; they are drunkards! and too many Cretans, they are liars! Buy for me Cappadocians, Asiatics, and Negroes."

He was astonished at the small number of children. "Every year, Giddenem, the establishment should have some births. You must leave the huts open every night, so that they may mix freely."

The governor then pointed out to him the thieves, the lazy, and the mutinous, and he distributed chastisements, with reproaches to Giddenem, who, like a bull, drooped his low forehead, with its thick intercrossed eyebrows.

"Look, Eye of Baal," said the governor, pointing to a robust Libyan, "there; behold one who was discovered with a rope around his neck."

"Ah! so you want to die?" scornfully said the Suffete.

And the slave, in an intrepid tone, answered: "Yes!"

Without caring either for the example or pecuniary loss, Hamilcar ordered—"Away with him!"

Perhaps he had in his mind the idea of a sacrifice. It was a misfortune that he inflicted upon himself in order to ward off more terrible ones.

Giddenem had hidden the mutilated slaves behind the others, but Hamilcar perceived them, and demanded of one:

"Who cut your arm?"

"The soldiers, Eye of Baal."

Then addressing himself to a Samnite, who staggered like a wounded heron, he said:

"And you—who did that to you?"

The governor had broken his leg with an iron bar. Such atrocious imbecility exasperated the Suffete and he jerked the string of jet away from Giddenem.

"Curses be upon the dog who wounds the herds! Crippler of slaves—gracious Tanit! Ah, thus would you ruin your master! Let him be smothered in a dung-heap! And those who are missing, where are they? Have you assisted the soldiers to assassinate them?"

His face became so terrible that all the women fled, and the slaves drew back, making a wide circle; meantime Giddenem frantically kissed Hamilcar's feet, who stood with his hands raised over him.

But his mind, now clear as during the most critical moment of battle, recalled a thousand odious things, the ignominies from which he had turned, and by the gleam of his anger, as by the lightnings of a terrible storm, he instantly realised his

misfortunes. The governors of the country estates had fled from terror, possibly by connivance with the soldiers; all were deceiving him. For a long time he had restrained himself; but now he cried out:

"Let them be brought and branded on their foreheads with red-hot iron, as cowards!"

The fetters, pillories, knives, and chains for those condemned to the mines, the *cippes* to grip their legs, the *numella* to confine their shoulders, and the scorpions, or whips of three thongs terminating in brazen claws, all were brought and spread out in the middle of the gardens.

The slaves were placed facing the sun, toward Moloch the Devourer, extended on the ground flat on their faces, or on their backs; and those condemned to flagellation were fastened against trees with two men beside them, the one who struck the blows and the other who counted the stripes. The former wielded the whip with both arms, the thongs whistling sharply through the air at each blow, and making the bark fly off the plane trees; the blood would spurt from the culprit's body like rain over the foliage; and red masses writhed, howling, at the foot of the trees. Those who were branded tore their faces with their nails. The wooden screws creaked, dull thuds were heard, and sometimes, over all, a sharp scream from the victim suddenly pierced the air. In the direction of the kitchens, amid ragged clothing and dishevelled hair, men could be seen with bellows reviving the fires, and the atmosphere was charged with the odour of burning flesh. The whipped creatures fainted; but, retained by the cords around their arms, helplessly, with closed eyes, rolled their heads on their shoulders. Those who were looking on uttered screams of fright; and the lions, perhaps recalling the recent feast, yawned and stretched themselves against the narrow confines of their dens.

Salammbô was now seen on the platform of her terrace: she was wildly walking from right to left. Hamilcar saw her, and it seemed to him that she lifted her arms towards him to beseech forgiveness. With a gesture of horror he straightway passed into the elephant paddocks.

These animals were the pride of the noble Punic families. They had borne their ancestors, had triumphed in the wars, and they were revered as favourites of the sun.

Those of Megara were the strongest in Carthage. Before his departure on his last expedition, Hamilcar had charged Abdalonim under oath that he would ever watch over these creatures. But they had died from their mutilations, and now only three were left, lying in the dust in the middle of the court, before the remnants of their manger.

Recognising Hamilcar, the elephants came toward him.

One had his ears dreadfully slit; another a large gaping wound on his knee; and the third had his trunk cut off. They looked at him with a pitiful air, like reasoning persons; and the one that had lost his trunk lowered his enormous head, and bending his knees, endeavoured to stroke his master gently with the hideous extremity of its stump. At this attempted caress from the wounded animal, tears gushed from the Suf-fete's eyes, and he sprang upon Abdalonim.

"Oh, wretch! to the cross! to the cross!" Abdalonim fainted, falling backward to the ground.

From behind the purple factories, whence blue smoke slowly curled up to the heavens, the yelp of a jackal rang out. Hamilcar paused.

The thought of his son, like contact with a god, calmed him at once. It was a prolongation of his strength, an indefinite continuation of his personality, which now appeared before his mind; and the slaves could not comprehend from what source came this sudden appeasement to their master.

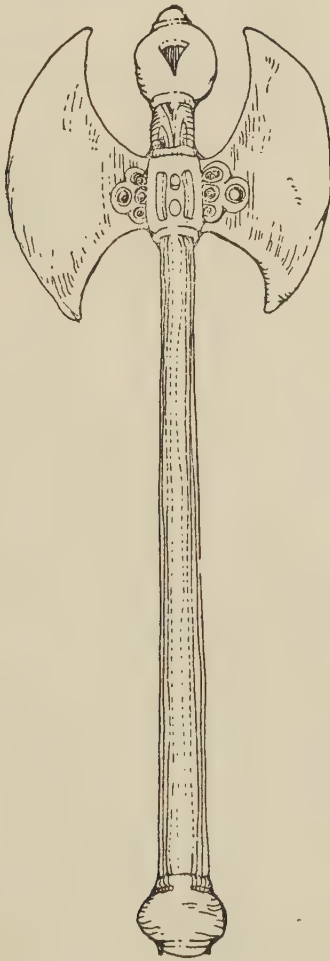
He diverged toward the purple dye factories; he passed before the *ergastulum*, a long black stone structure built in a square pit, with a little passage around it, and four stairways at the corners.

To complete his signal, Iddibal was doubtless waiting for nightfall. Nothing was yet pressing, Hamilcar thought. As he descended into the prison some cried out to him:

"Come back!" The most daring followed him.

The open door swung to and fro in the wind. Twilight entered through the narrow loopholes, revealing in the interior

broken chains hanging to the walls. Behold, these were all that remained of the war captives! Then Hamilcar grew extraordinarily pale, and those who lingered outside in the ditch saw him put one hand against the wall for support. But the jackal again yelped three times in succession. Hamilcar lifted his head, he did not speak a word, he did not move. As soon as the sun had completely set he disappeared behind the cactus hedge; and at night, as he entered the assembly of the Rich convened in the temple of Eschmoûn, he said: "Lights of the Baalim, I accept the command of the Punic forces against the Barbarians!"



VIII: THE OF THE

BATTLE MACAR



ON THE following day he drew two hundred and twenty-three thousand kikars of gold from the Syssites and imposed a tax of fourteen shekels on the Rich. The women also were made to contribute, a tax had to be paid for the children; and, foreign to all Carthaginian customs, he forced the colleges of priests to furnish money.

He demanded all horses, mules, and weapons. The possessions of those who misrepresented their wealth were confiscated and sold; and, in order to abash the avaricious, he personally contributed sixty suits of armour, and twelve hundred gomers of meal—as much as was given by the Ivory Company.

He sent to Liguria to hire as soldiers three thousand mountaineers accustomed to fight bears, advancing to them six moons' pay, at four minæ a day.

Though it was necessary to form an army, he did not follow Hanno's example of accepting all the citizens. In the first place he rejected those of sedentary occupations; next, those whose bellies were too large, or whose appearance was cowardly; while, on the other hand, he admitted dishonoured men, the dissolute of Malqua, the sons of Barbarians, and freed slaves. As reward, he promised to the New Carthaginians all the rights of the city.

His first undertaking was to re-form the Legion—those fine young men who considered themselves the military glory of the Republic, and were self-governed. He reduced all the officers to the ranks; he treated the men roughly, making them run, leap and ascend the slope of Byrsa without halting; hurl javelins, wrestle, and even sleep out of doors in the public squares. Their families came to see and pity them.

He directed that the swords should be made shorter, and the buskins stouter; he restricted the number of attendants, and reduced the baggage. In the temple of Moloch was kept a treasure of three hundred Roman pilums, which he took despite the pontiff's protests.

With the elephants that had returned from Utica, and those that were the personal property of citizens, he organised a phalanx of seventy-two, and used every device to render them formidable. Their drivers were provided with a mallet and chisel to split open the animals' skulls if during a *mêlée* they tried to run away.

He would not permit the Grand Council to elect his generals. The Elders endeavoured to oppose the laws to him, but he overrode them, and not one dared murmur: all bent under the vehemence of his genius. He assumed the sole direction of the war, the government, and the finances; and, to prevent accusations against him, he insisted that the Suffete Hanno should be made examiner of his accounts.

To procure sufficient stones to repair the rampart he demolished the old interior walls, which were at present useless. But difference of fortune, replacing the hierarchy of races, still made an unsurmountable barrier between the sons of the vanquished and those of the victors; and the patricians watched with an irritated eye the destruction of these ruins, while the plebeians, hardly knowing why, rejoiced over it.

From morn to night armed troops marched through the streets; every moment the sound of trumpets was heard; chariots passed laden with bucklers, tents, and pikes; the courts were thronged with women making bandages; the ardour of one

communicated itself to another; the soul of Hamilcar inspired the Republic.

He had distributed the soldiers in equal numbers of pairs, placing along the lines alternately a strong and a weak man, so that the less vigorous or more cowardly would be led and impelled by two others. But with his three thousand Ligurians and the best of the Carthaginians, he could form only a simple phalanx of four thousand and ninety-six hoplites, protected by bronze casques, and wielding ashwood sarissas fourteen cubits long.

Two thousand young men were armed with slings and a poniard, and shod in sandals. These he reënforced with eight hundred others, armed with round bucklers and Roman swords.

The heavy cavalry consisted of the nineteen hundred remaining guards of the Legion, mailed in vermilion bronze like the Assyrian Clinabarians. He had four hundred mounted archers, called Tarentines, wearing weasel-skin caps and leather tunics, and armed with a double-edged battle-axe. Finally, mixed with the Clinabarians were twelve hundred Negroes from the quarter of the caravans, who were to run alongside of the stallions, clutching their manes with one hand.

All was ready; yet Hamilcar did not start.

Frequently at night he would leave Carthage, and unaccompanied go a distance beyond the Lagoon, toward the mouths of the Macar. Did he intend to join the Mercenaries? The Ligurians camped in the Mappalian district surrounded his mansion.

The apprehensions entertained by the Rich appeared justified when one day they beheld three hundred Barbarians approach the walls. The Suffete ordered the gates to be opened to them; they were deserters, and, impelled either by fear or fidelity, they came to their master.

Hamilcar's return did not astonish the Mercenaries, for they did not believe this man could die. He was returning to fulfill his promises—a hope which had in it nothing absurd, considering how deep the abyss was between the Republic and the

Army. Besides, they did not consider themselves culpable; they had already forgotten the feast.

The spies whom they surprised undeceived them. It was a triumph for the desperate; even the lukewarm became furious. The two sieges had overwhelmed them with weariness; nothing was being achieved, it were far better to have a battle! Thus, many of the men, disbanding, had taken to wandering over the country, but at the news of the armament they returned.

Mâtho leaped with joy, crying out:

“At last! At last!”

The resentment which he had centred upon Salammbô now turned against Hamilcar. His hatred had for its object a settled prey; and as vengeance became more easy to conceive, he almost fancied he had attained it, and already gloated over it. At the same time he was possessed by a deeper tenderness and devoured by a keener desire.

At one time he saw himself in the midst of the soldiers, brandishing the Suffete's head upon a pike. At another time in the chamber with the purple couch, holding the maiden in his arms, covering her face with kisses, stroking her splendid long black hair; and this vision, which he knew could never be realised, tortured him. He swore to himself, since his comrades had named him Schalischim, to command the war, and the certainty that he would never return from it determined him to render it pitiless.

He sought out Spendius in his tent, and said to him:

“You get your men! I shall bring mine! Warn Autharitus! We are lost if Hamilcar attacks us! Do you hear me? Arise!”

Spendius was stupefied by this authoritative air. Mâtho had so long permitted himself to be led, and the fits of passion he had previously evinced had always quickly subsided. But now he seemed at once calmer and more terrible; a superb will flashed in his eyes like the flames of sacrifice.

The Greek did not heed Mâtho's reasons. He occupied one of the pearl-embroidered Carthaginian tents, spending his time drinking cool drinks from silver cups, playing at cottabus; letting his hair grow long, and conducting the siege indolently.

Also he had established secret communications with the city, and did not wish to depart, believing that before many days it would open its gates.

Narr' Havas, who constantly wandered between the three armies, at this juncture was with Spendius. He supported his opinion, and even blamed Mâtho for being willing through an excess of courage to abandon their enterprise.

"Leave, then, if you are afraid!" cried Mâtho, "you promised us pitch, sulphur, elephants, foot soldiers and horses—where are they?"

Narr' Havas reminded him that he had exterminated Hanno's last cohorts; as for the elephants, his men were now hunting for them in his forests; he was equipping the infantry, and the horses were already on the way.

As he talked the Numidian kept stroking the ostrich plume that fell over his shoulder, rolling his eyes like a woman and all the time smiling in an aggravating manner. Mâtho stood before him unable to reply.

Just then an unknown man entered, dripping with sweat, terrified, his feet bleeding, his girdle unfastened; and his laboured breathing shook his thin sides enough to burst them; he launched forth in an unintelligent dialect, with wide open eyes, as if he were telling of a battle.

The Numidian king sprang outside the tent and summoned his horsemen. They ranged themselves on the plain in the form of a circle before Narr' Havas, who was now mounted; he bent his head and bit his lips. At last he divided his men in two divisions, ordering the first section to await him; then, with an imperious gesture, he led the other section at a gallop, and disappeared on the horizon in the direction of the mountains.

"Master!" said Spendius, "I do not like these extraordinary chances—the Suffete who returns, and Narr' Havas who goes off!"

"Well! what matters it?" said Mâtho disdainfully.

It was but another reason why they must forestall Hamilcar and rejoin Autharitus. But if they abandoned the siege of the cities the inhabitants would come out and attack them in

the rear, while they would have the Carthaginians in front of them. After many discussions they resolved upon the following plan, which was immediately put in execution.

Spendius with fifteen thousand men proceeded as far as the bridge over the Macar, three miles from Utica. The corners of it were fortified by four enormous towers upon which were planted catapults. With trunks of trees and masses of rock, barricades of thorn bushes and stone walls, all the mountain paths and gorges were blocked. On the summits heaps of grass were piled up ready to be fired as signals; and shepherds, accustomed to see at long distances, were posted at regular intervals.

Hamilcar, doubtless, would not take the road by the Hot Springs Mountain as had Hanno. He would certainly conclude that Autharitus, being master of the interior, would close the road against him. Then a check at the beginning of the campaign would ruin Hamilcar, while a victory would only result in soon having to begin over again, the Mercenaries being a little further away. Again, he could land at the Cape of Grapes and then march on to one of the cities; but he would find himself between the two armies: an imprudence which he could not risk with so small a number of troops. Therefore he was bound to proceed along the base of the Ariana and turn to the left to avoid the mouths of the Macar, and march straight to the bridge. It was there that Mâtho waited for him.

At night by torchlight he inspected the pioneers; anon he hastened to Hippo-Zarytus, to inspect the works in the mountains, returning so full of his plans that he could not rest. Spendius envied his strength; when it came to directing spies, choosing sentinels, constructing machines, and arranging methods of defence, Mâtho listened docilely to his companion. They talked no more of Salammbô—one not thinking of her and the other restrained by a sense of shame.

Often Mâtho went in the direction of Carthage striving to catch sight of Hamilcar's army. He darted his eyes along the horizon, threw himself flat on the earth, and in the throbbing of his own arteries believed he could hear the tramp of troops. He declared to Spendius that if Hamilcar did not appear

within three days, he would march with all his men to meet him and offer battle. Two days more passed, still Spendius contrived to detain him; but the morning of the sixth day he departed.

The Carthaginians were just as impatient for battle as the Barbarians. In the tents and in the houses all felt the same desire, the same pangs; all were asking what was delaying Hamilcar.

From time to time, the Suffete ascended the cupola of the temple of Eschmoûn and stood beside the Announcer-of-the-Moons to observe the winds. One day, the third of the month of Tibby, he was seen descending the Acropolis with hurried steps. A great clamour arose in the Mappals, the streets were filled with commotion, and everywhere soldiers began to arm themselves, amid the cries of distracted women, who threw themselves upon their breasts; then they ran to the square of Khamoûn and fell into their ranks. No one was permitted to follow or speak to the soldiers, or to approach the ramparts: during some minutes the entire town was as silent as a vast tomb. The soldiers leaned on their lances thoughtfully, and those in the houses sighed.

At sunset the army marched through the western gate, but instead of taking the road to Tunis or starting for the mountains in the direction of Utica, they went along the seacoast, and by this road they soon reached the Lagoon, where large round spots whitened with salt glistened like gigantic silver plates forgotten on the shores. Further on, the puddles of water multiplied, the ground gradually became softer, the soldiers' feet sank in it; yet Hamilcar went on. He always moved at the head of the troops, mounted on his horse, spotted yellow like a dragon, that kept tossing the froth about as he advanced, straining his loins, through the mire. Night came, misty and moonless. Some of the soldiers cried out that they would perish; he snatched away their weapons and gave them to the serving men.

At every step the mud became deeper and deeper; it was necessary for the men to mount the beasts of burden, others clung to the horses' tails; the robust pulled up the weak, and the Ligurians drove forward the infantry at the points of their spears. The obscurity increased: the road was lost: all halted.

Then the Suffete's slaves advanced to seek for the buoys planted at certain distances by his orders; they shouted back through the darkness and the army followed them.

Soon the resistance of firm ground was felt. Then a whitish curve became vaguely outlined, and they found themselves on the banks of the Macar. Notwithstanding the cold, no fires were lighted.

In the middle of the night squalls of wind arose. Hamilcar commanded the officers to arouse the soldiers, but no trumpets were sounded; the captains moved quietly about, tapping the men on their shoulders.

A very tall man waded into the water; it did not reach to his girdle; the army could ford it.

The Suffete ordered thirty-two of the elephants to be placed in the stream, one hundred paces apart, whilst others stationed below would stay the lines of men being swept away by the current; and all the troops, holding their weapons above their heads, crossed the Macar as between two walls. Hamilcar's observations had revealed the fact that when the westerly winds blew they drove the sand in such a way as to obstruct the stream by forming across it a natural causeway.

He was now on the left bank facing Utica, and on a vast plain, an advantage for the elephants, which constituted the main strength of his army.

This stroke of genius aroused the enthusiasm of the soldiers; an extraordinary confidence returned to them; they wanted to fall immediately upon the Barbarians; but the Suffete ordered them to rest for two hours. As soon as the sun appeared the troops marched into the plain, in three lines; the elephants first, then the light infantry with the cavalry behind them, and lastly the phalanx.

The Barbarians encamped at Utica, and the fifteen thousand

around the bridge were surprised to see the ground undulating in the distance. The wind, which was blowing briskly, chased tornadoes of dust; they rose, as if detached from the soil, in large golden pillars, then parted asunder, always beginning again, and thus hiding from the view of the Mercenaries the Punic army. The effect produced by the horns placed on the side of the casques caused some to believe that they perceived a herd of cattle; others, deceived by the fluttering mantles, pretended to distinguish wings; and those who had travelled much shrugged their shoulders, saying that it was the illusion of the mirage. Still something subtle of enormous size continued to advance. Little vapours, as breaths, floated over the surface of the desert. The sun, now much higher, shone powerfully; a fierce glare, which seemed to quiver, made the depth of the sky more profound, and permeating objects rendered the distance incalculable.

The immense plain unfolded on all sides beyond the reach of vision; and the almost invisible undulations of the ground were prolonged to the extreme horizon, closed in by the long blue line which they knew to be the sea. The two armies went forth from their tents to gaze; and the people of Utica crowded upon the ramparts.

They distinguished many transverse bars bristling with even points; these became thicker and larger; black hillocks swayed; suddenly square bushes appeared: they were the elephants and the lances. A single yell burst forth:

"The Carthaginians!" and, without signal or command, the soldiers at Utica and those stationed at the bridge made a dash pell-mell to fall in one body upon Hamilcar.

Spendius shuddered and breathlessly repeated, "Hamilcar! Hamilcar!" And Mâtho was not there! What should be done? No means for flight!

The surprise of this event, his terror of the Suffete, and above all the urgency for an immediate resolution, upset him: he could see himself slashed by a thousand swords, decapitated, dead.

Meanwhile they called for him. Thirty thousand men were

ready to follow his leadership; a fury against himself seized him and he fell back upon the hope of victory; it was full of delight, and he fancied himself braver than Epaminondas. To hide his pallor he smeared his cheeks with vermilion, then he buckled on his greaves and cuirass, swallowed a cup of pure wine, and ran hotly after his troops, who had hastened toward those of Utica.

They united so rapidly that the Suffete had not time to range his men in line of battle. Gradually he slackened his pace. The elephants stopped, swaying their heavy heads, covered with ostrich-plumes, and beating their shoulders with their trunks.

At the back through the intervals could be distinguished the cohorts of velites, and further on, the large helmets of the Clinabarians with polished weapons that glittered under the sun's rays; cuirasses, plumes, and waving standards. But the Punic army, all told numbering only eleven thousand three hundred and ninety-six men, seemed scarcely to contain so many, for it formed a long square, narrowed at the flank and closed up on itself. Seeing them so weak the Barbarians were possessed with a riotous joy, for they were three times the number of the enemy.

As yet no one had discerned Hamilcar; he had perhaps remained behind? What difference, after all? The disdain that they had for these merchant soldiers reënforced their courage; and before Spendius could command the manœuvre, it had all been anticipated and already executed.

They deployed in a long straight line that overlapped the wings of the Punic army, in order to completely encompass it. But when they were not more than three hundred paces apart, the elephants, instead of advancing, turned back; then behold, the Clinabarians wheeled round and followed them, and the surprise of the Mercenaries was great when they perceived all the archers running to rejoin them. The Carthaginians were afraid; they were flying! A formidable hooting burst out among the Barbarian troops, and from the back of his dromedary Spendius cried out:

"Ah, I knew it well! Advance! Forward!"

Then launched forth instantaneously, through the air, streams of javelins and darts, and balls from whirring slings. The elephants, galled on their haunches by the flying arrows, galloped rapidly and stirred up a great dust, presently vanishing like shadows in a cloud.

Far beyond could be distinguished a loud noise of tramping, predominated by the shrill blare of trumpets blown furiously. The spaces before the Barbarians, full of eddies and tumult, drew them in like a whirlpool, and some dashed headlong into it.

Some infantry cohorts appeared; they closed their ranks, and simultaneously all the others saw the foot soldiers running with the galloping cavalry.

Hamilcar had ordered the phalanx to break its sections for the elephants, light infantry, and cavalry to pass through these intervals, in order to take up their stations quickly on the wings; and he had so exactly calculated the distance from the Barbarians that at the moment when they came within reach, the entire Carthaginian army was re-formed in a long straight line.

In the centre bristled the phalanx, formed in syntagmata or perfect squares, having sixteen men on each side. All the file leaders appeared between the long sharp points, which jutted unequally beyond them, for the first six ranks crossed their sarissas, holding them in the middle, and the ten lower ranks supported theirs on the shoulders of their comrades immediately before them. Their faces were half hidden under the visors of their casques, bronze greaves covered their right legs, and broad cylindrical shields reached down to their knees; and this awful quadrangular mass, moving as a single piece, seemed to possess the life of an animal and the functions of a machine. It was flanked by two cohorts of elephants, and the huge creatures kept shaking themselves, to detach the splinters of the arrows sticking in their black hides. The Indians crouching on their necks amidst tufts of white plumes, guided them with the spoon-shaped end of the harpoons they wielded; while in the towers men concealed as far as their shoulders, waved, behind the great bent bows, iron holders containing burning tow.

On the right and left of the elephants hovered the slingers, each with a sling around his head, another about his loins, and a third in his right hand. Then came the Clinabarians, each one flanked by a Negro, holding their lances between the ears of their horses, covered, like their riders, with gold. Following at intervals came the light-armed soldiers, with bucklers of lynx-skin, over which projected the points of the javelins which they held in their left hands; and the Tarentines, each managing two horses coupled together, finished off at both extremities this wall of soldiers.

The Barbarian army, on the contrary, had not been able to maintain its line. Its enormous length wavered and opened out in gaps. All panted, breathless from running.

The phalanx swayed heavily as it thrust forward all its sarissas; under this tremendous weight the Mercenaries' thin lines gave way in the middle.

The Carthaginian wings opened out to seize them; the elephants followed: with lances held obliquely the phalanx cut the Barbarians in two; both the enormous bodies were shaken; the wings, with volleys of arrows and balls, drove them back against the phalangites. The cavalry failed to disengage itself, with the exception of two hundred Numidians, who charged the right squadron of the Clinabarians. All the others were hemmed in and could not escape from the lines. Destruction was imminent and the necessity of coming to some resolution urgent.

Spendius commanded an attack on both flanks of the phalanx to be made simultaneously, so as to force a passage right through it. But the narrowest ranks glided within the longer ones, returned to their position, and the phalanx wheeled to meet the Barbarians, as terrible on its flanks as it had been just before on its front.

They struck against the staves of the sarissas; the cavalry in the rear foiled their attack, and the phalanx, supported by the elephants, kept closing up and extending, and presented successively a square, a cone, a rhombus, a trapezium, and a pyramid. A double interior movement was continually being

made from its front to its rear, as those who were at the end of the files ran toward the first ranks, while those who were fatigued or wounded fell back to the base. The Barbarians found themselves crowded on to the phalanx. It was impossible for it to advance; the field of action appeared like an ocean whereon were tossing red plumes and bronze scales, while the bright bucklers rolled like silver foam. Sometimes from end to end wide currents would descend and then ascend, while in the centre a dense mass remained motionless.

The lances dipped and rose alternately. Elsewhere was so rapid a movement of naked blades that only the points could be distinguished, and the cavalry troops swept in wide circles which closed up behind them in eddies.

Above the captains' voices, the blare of the clarions and the twanging of lyres, leaden bullets and almond-shaped pellets of clay whistled through the air, smiting swords from hands and making brains leap from skulls. The wounded, sheltering themselves with one arm under their shields, pointed their swords while the pommel rested on the ground, and others, writhing in pools of blood, turned to bite the passers' heels. The multitude was so compact, the dust so thick, the tumult so deafening, that it was impossible to distinguish anything clearly; the cowards who offered to surrender were not even heard. When men were disarmed they gripped body to body, and breasts cracked against the cuirasses, and the heads of the corpses hung backward between nerveless arms. There was a company of sixty Umbrians who, firm on their legs, their pikes advanced before their eyes, unshaken and grinding their teeth, cut down and forced back two syntagmata at once. The Epirote shepherds ran to the left squadron of the Clinabarians, seized their horses by the manes, twisting their clubs in them, till the tortured animals, throwing their riders, fled across the plain. The Punic slingers, scattered here and there, stood agape. The phalanx began to waver, the captains ran about distracted, the rear ranks pressed on the soldiers, and the Barbarians had reformed their lines. They returned to the charge; the victory was within reach.

But a cry, one frightful shriek, burst out, a roar of pain and rage; it came from the seventy-two elephants charging in a double line. Hamilcar had waited until the Mercenaries were massed in a single spot, before loosing the elephants upon them; the Indians had goaded them so cruelly that the blood ran over their large ears. Their trunks were bedaubed with minium, and they held them straight in the air like red serpents; to their breasts were fastened boar-spears, their backs were protected by cuirasses, their tusks elongated with iron blades curved like sabres; and to render them more ferocious, they had been intoxicated with a mixture of pepper, pure wine, and incense. They shook their necklaces of bells, shrieking, and the elephantarchs lowered their heads to avoid the stream of flaming darts which began to fly from the tops of the towers.

In order to resist the charge more effectually, the Barbarians closed up in a compact body; the elephants dashed themselves impetuously into the middle of it. The boar-spears attached to their breasts like the prows of ships clove through the cohorts, which fell back in great waves; with their trunks the elephants kept strangling men, or, snatching them from the ground, held them over their heads and delivered them to the soldiers in the tower; with their tusks they disembowelled their victims and tossed their bodies in the air, while long entrails hung from their ivory tusks like bundles of cordage from masts. The Barbarians endeavoured to blind them or hamstring them; others glided under their bodies and plunged their blades up to the hilts, but were crushed beneath the falling animals and perished; the more intrepid clutched on to their girths, under the down-pouring volley of flames, balls, and arrows, and continued to sever the leather till the wicker towers rolled off like a tower of stones. Fourteen elephants on the extreme right, maddened by their wounds, turned on the second line; the Indians seized their mallets and chisels, and applying them to the neck-joint, with all their force struck one mighty blow.

Down sank the enormous animals, falling one upon another, forming almost a mountain, and on the heap of carcasses and armour a monstrous elephant, called Fury of Baal, caught by the

leg among the chains, trumpeted till evening with an arrow in his eye.

Meanwhile the others, like conquerors who delight in the extermination of their foes, were overthrowing, crushing, stamping, venting their fury on the corpses and on the wreckage. In order to repel them, the companies pressed around them in close circles, but they turned on their hind feet in a continual rotary movement, always advancing. The Carthaginians felt their strength multiply, and the battle raged again.

The Barbarians weakened; some Greek hoplites threw away their weapons; a panic seized the others. Spendius was seen leaning forward on his dromedary as he goaded its shoulders with two javelins. Then all made a dash toward the wings and ran in the direction of Utica.

The Clinabarians, whose horses were exhausted, made no effort to overtake them. The Ligurians, overcome by thirst, screamed to be carried to the stream. But the Carthaginians, placed in the middle of the syntagmata, had suffered least, and stamped their feet with eagerness when they saw their vengeance escaping; already they were starting in pursuit of the Mercenaries, when Hamilcar appeared.

With silver reins he curbed his foam-flecked, dappled horse. The bandlets attached to the horns of his casque clattered in the wind behind him, and he had placed his oval shield beneath his left thigh. With a movement of his three-pointed pike he checked the army.

The Tarentines sprang quickly upon their horses, and departed to the right and left toward the water and the city.

The phalanx easily exterminated all the remaining Barbarians. When the swords came near, they closed their eyes and stretched out their throats. Others defended themselves to the death; they were struck down from far off under a shower of stones, like mad dogs. Hamilcar had ordered his men to take prisoners; but the Carthaginians obeyed him grudgingly, as it gave them pleasure to plunge their swords into the Barbarians' bodies. When they became heated they set to work with naked arms like mowers, and when they stopped to take breath they

followed with their eyes across the country a horseman in pursuit of a runaway soldier. He would succeed in catching him by the hair and hold him thus some moments, then cut him down with a blow of his battle-axe.

Night fell. The Carthaginians and Barbarians had disappeared. The elephants that had fled were roaming on the horizon, with their towers on fire, burning in the darkness here and there, like moving beacons, half lost in the mist; and no other movement was noticeable over the plain than the rippling of the stream swollen by the corpses which were drifting out to sea.

Two hours later, Mâtho arrived. By the starlight he caught sight of long unequal heaps lying upon the ground. They were files of Barbarians. He stooped down; all were dead. He called aloud; not one voice replied.

That same morning he had quitted Hippo-Zarytus with his soldiers to march on Carthage; he reached Utica, to find that Spendius's army had just left, and the inhabitants had begun to fire the war-machines. All had fought furiously. But the tumult that was raging in the direction of the bridge redoubled in an incomprehensible manner. Mâtho hurried by the shortest route across the mountain, but as the Barbarians were flying by the plain, he had met no one.

Before him small pyramidal masses stood out in shadow, and nearer, on this side of the stream, were motionless lights level with the ground. In fact, the Carthaginians had fallen back behind the bridge, and to deceive the Barbarians, the Suffete had established numerous posts on the other bank.

Mâtho continued to press forward, believing that he distinguished Punic ensigns, for horses' heads which did not move appeared in the air fixed on the top of staves, thrust in invisible stacks of arms, and he heard in the distance a great uproar, the noise of songs and clinking of cups.

Then, unable to find out where he was, or how to reach Spendius, and quite overcome by anguish, terrified and lost in the

darkness, he impetuously retraced his steps by the same route. The dawn was breaking, when from the mountain height he saw the town, with the frames of the engines blackened by the flames and leaning like giant skeletons against the walls.

All was hushed in an unusual silence and dejection. Amongst his soldiers on the edge of the tents slept men almost naked, stretched out on their backs, or with their foreheads on their arms, supported by their cuirasses. Some of them were unfastening the bloody bandages from their legs. Those who were dying rolled their heads gently; others were dragging themselves in search of water for their comrades. Along the narrow paths, sentinels patrolled to keep themselves warm, or stood, their faces turned savagely toward the horizon, and their pikes on their shoulders.

Mâtho found Spendius sheltered under a piece of canvas that was hung from two poles driven into the ground, his knees between his hands, his head bent.

They remained awhile without speaking. Finally Mâtho murmured: "Defeated!"

Spendius replied in a gloomy voice: "Yes, defeated!"

And to all questions he answered only by gestures of despair.

Meanwhile, moans and death-rattles were heard on all sides. Mâtho partially opened the canvas. Then the sight of the soldiers reminded him of another disaster in the same place, and grinding his teeth, he exclaimed: "Wretch! once already . . ."

Spendius interrupted him: "But you were not there, either!"

"It is a curse!" cried Mâtho. "At last, nevertheless, I shall reach him. I shall vanquish him! I shall slay him! Ah, if I had only been there! . . ." The idea of having missed the battle stung him to greater desperation than the defeat. He pulled off his sword and threw it to the ground. "But how did the Carthaginians defeat you?"

The former slave recounted the manœuvres. Mâtho felt that he saw them, and was exasperated. The army of Utica, instead of running toward the bridge, should have fallen upon Hamilcar in the rear.

"Alas! I know it," said Spendius.



HE CALLED ALOUD; NOT ONE VOICE REPLIED

"You ought to have doubled the depths of your ranks, not to have engaged the phalanx with the light troops, and have made way for the elephants. Up to the last moment you could have regained the field; there was no need to retreat."

Spendius answered: "I saw Hamilcar pass by in his large red mantle, his arms raised above the dust like an eagle flying on the flanks of the cohorts, and at every gesture of his head they closed in or extended their ranks; the multitude drew us the one toward the other; he was looking at me; I felt a cold steel in my heart!"

"Perhaps he chose the day?" Mâtho said in an undertone to himself.

They questioned each other, trying to fathom what had brought the Suffete back at precisely the most desperate time. Either to mitigate his fault, or to bolster up his own courage, Spendius declared that there was still some hope.

"And if there were none it would not matter," retorted Mâtho. "I should continue the war all alone!"

"And I, too!" cried the Greek, leaping up. He walked with long strides, his eyes flashing, and a strange smile wrinkled his jackal face.

"We will make a new start; do not leave me again! I am not made for battles in the daylight; the flash of swords troubles my vision; it is a disease; I lived too long in the *ergastulum*. But give me walls to scale at night, and I will penetrate to the citadels, and the corpses shall be cold before cock-crow! Show me someone—something—an enemy, a treasure, a woman," he repeated—"a woman, be she the daughter of a king, and I will quickly bring your desire to your feet. You reproach me for having lost the battle against Hanno; nevertheless it was I who regained it—confess it! My drove of swine did better service than a phalanx of Spartans."

And yielding to the desire to exalt himself and take his revenge, he enumerated all that he had done for the cause of the Mercenaries.

"It was I, in the gardens of the Suffete, who incited the Gauls! Later at Sicca I maddened them all with fear of the

Republic; Gisco was about to send the interpreters back, but I did not choose that they should be able to speak. Ah, how their tongues hung out of their mouths! Do you remember? I led you to Carthage; I stole the Zaïmph; I guided you to her; I will do still more; you shall see!" He burst into laughter like a madman.

Mâtho looked at him with wide eyes. He was ill at ease before this man, who was at once so cowardly and so ferocious.

The Greek reassumed a jovial tone, snapped his fingers, and continued: "By Bacchus! After the rain the sun! I have worked in the quarries, and I have drunk Massic wine, in a ship which I owned, beneath a golden canopy like a Ptolemy. Misfortune ought to render us more capable. By force of toil one bends fortune. She loves the crafty; she will yield!"

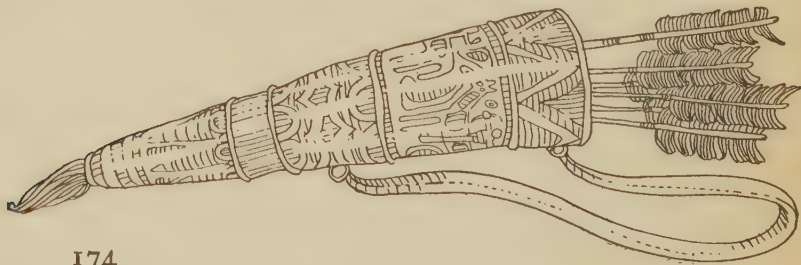
He went over to Mâtho and took him by the arm.

"Master, at present the Carthaginians are sure of their victory. You have a whole army which has not been in combat, and your men obey *you*! Place them in the front; mine will follow, for vengeance's sake. I still have three thousand Carians, twelve hundred slingers and archers, complete cohorts! We might even form a phalanx: let us return!"

Mâtho, stunned by the disaster, until now had imagined no way of recovery. He listened with open mouth; the bronze plates at his sides rose and fell with the throbbing of his heart. He picked up his sword and cried out:

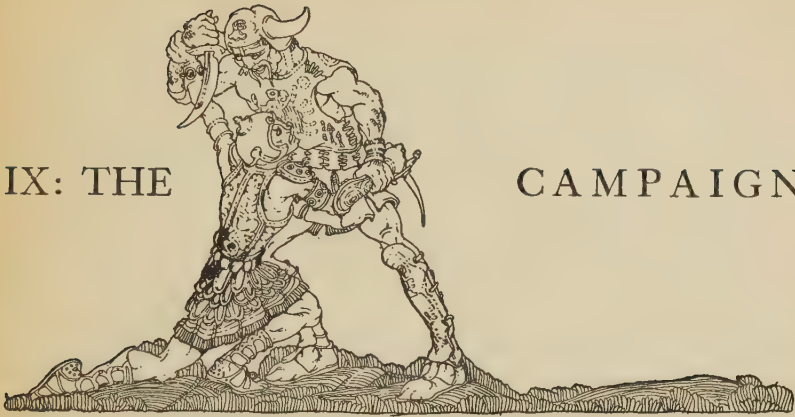
"Follow me! Forward!"

But when the scouts returned, they reported that the Carthaginian dead had been carried away, the bridge was in ruins, and Hamilcar was nowhere to be seen.



IX: THE

CAMPAIGN



HE HAD thought that the Mercenaries would await him at Utica, or might return against him; and, knowing that his army was not strong enough to deliver or receive an attack, he had gone southward of the right bank of the river, which protected him from the danger of a surprise.

Shutting his eyes to their revolt, he wished to detach all the tribes from the cause of the Barbarians; then, when the latter were safely isolated in the middle of the provinces, he would fall upon and exterminate them.

In fourteen days he pacified the region between Thouccaber and Utica, with the towns of Tignicabah, Tessourah, Vacca, and others to the west. Zounghar, built in the mountains, Assouras, celebrated for its temple, Djeraado, fruitful in juniper trees, Thapitis and Hagour sent ambassadors to him.

The country people came laden with provisions, imploring his protection, kissing his feet and the feet of his soldiers, and uttering bitter complaints against the Barbarians. Some offered sacks holding the heads of Mercenaries whom they claimed to have killed, but which in fact they had cut from the corpses that they found, as numberless soldiers were lost in the retreat,

and were afterward picked up dead in various places, some under the olive trees, others in the vineyards.

To dazzle the people, Hamilcar, the day after his victory, sent to Carthage the two thousand captives taken on the battlefield. They arrived in long companies, each consisting of a hundred men, their arms fastened behind their backs by a bronze bar which caught them at the nape of their necks; even the wounded, still bleeding, were forced to run, driven along by cuts from the whips of the horsemen riding behind them.

There was a delirium of joy! It was reported that six thousand Barbarians had been killed, the others could not hold out, and that the war was over. People embraced one another in the streets, and rubbed butter and cinnamon on the faces of the *Dii-Patæci*, to express their thankfulness. These gods, with their big eyes and their gross bellies, with their arms raised to their shoulders, seemed, under the access of fresh paint, to be alive and to participate in the happiness of the people.

The Rich left their doors open; the city resounded with the beating of tambourines; the temples were illuminated nightly, and the handmaidens of the goddess descended to Malqua, and established at the crossroads tressels of sycamore where they prostituted themselves. Lands were voted to the conquerors; holocausts to Melkarth; three hundred golden crowns to the Suffete, and his partisans suggested that new prerogatives and fresh honours be given to him.

Hamilcar had begged the Elders to make overtures to Autharitus, offering to exchange all the Barbarian prisoners, if necessary, for the aged Gisco and the other Carthaginians taken by him. The Libyans and the Nomads who composed Autharitus's army scarcely knew the Mercenaries, who were men of Italiote or Greek race; and inasmuch as the Republic offered so many Barbarians in exchange for so few Carthaginians, they decided that it must be because the Barbarian captives possessed no value in proportion to the others. They feared a trap. Autharitus refused.

Forthwith the Elders issued a decree for the execution of their prisoners, although the Suffete had written that they were

not to be put to death, as he had planned to incorporate the best with his own troops, hoping by this step to encourage defection. But hatred swept away all prudence.

The two thousand Barbarians were fastened against the stelas of the tombs in the Mappals; then the pedlars, kitchen scrubs, embroiderers, and even women, the widows of the dead warriors, with their children, joined by all who cared, came to kill them with arrows. In order to prolong their agony they slowly took deliberate aim. Each lowered his weapon, and raised it again by turns. The multitude crowded forward, hooting and howling. The paralytics had themselves brought on stretchers; many prudently came with provisions and stayed till evening; others passed the night there. Drinking booths had been set up. Many gained large sums by hiring out their bows.

The crucified bodies were left standing, appearing like so many red statues on the tombs; and the exultation was communicated even to the people of Malqua, descendants of the aboriginal tribes, who ordinarily were indifferent to events in the Republic. Out of gratitude for the present pleasure afforded to them by the government, they were now concerned in her fortunes, feeling themselves to be Punic; and the Elders considered it shrewd thus to have merged the entire people in the same vengeance.

The sanction of the gods was not wanting, for from every quarter of the sky ravens descended, beating their wings as they circled in the air, with loud, hoarse croaks, and making an enormous cloud which continually rolled back upon itself. It was visible from Clypea, from Rhades, and from the promontory of Hermizæum. Sometimes this mass would suddenly rift, widening afar its black spirals, as an eagle would swoop into its midst, and then soar away. On the terraces, on the domes, on the points of the obelisks, and on the pediments of the temples, here and there, big birds were perched holding in their reddened beaks fragments of human flesh.

As a result of the odour the Carthaginians resigned themselves to giving up the bodies. Some were burned, others were thrown into the sea, and, driven across the waves by the north

wind, were washed upon the beach at the end of the gulf before the camp of Autharitus.

This revenge had doubtless terrified the Barbarians; for from the roof of Eschmoûn they could be seen hastily pulling up their tents, rounding up their herds, and packing the baggage upon asses, so that by the evening of the same day the entire army had withdrawn.

It was planned, by marching and countermarching between the Hot Springs Mountain and Hippo-Zarytus, to prevent the Suffete approaching the Tyrian cities, and thus returning to Carthage.

Meantime, the two other armies endeavoured to reach him in the south, Spendius by the east, Mâtho by the west, so as to unite the three armies and then surprise and entrap him. An unlooked-for reënforcement astonished them, for Narr' Havas reappeared with three hundred camels laden with bitumen, twenty-five elephants, and six thousand horsemen.

To weaken the Mercenaries the Suffete had deemed it well to keep Narr' Havas busy in his own distant kingdom. From the heart of Carthage he had to come to an understanding with Masgaba, a Gætulian brigand who sought to make a realm for himself. Backed by Punic money, the adventurer had stirred the Numidian states to revolt, by promises of freedom. But Narr' Havas, warned by the son of his nurse, had surprised Cirta, poisoned the conquerors with the water in the cisterns, struck off some heads, and set everything in order: and he now returned more furious than the Barbarians against the Suffete.

The chiefs of the four armies agreed as to the conduct of the war. It would be long; every contingency must be foreseen.

It was agreed first to ask the assistance of the Romans, and this mission was offered to Spendius; but as a fugitive he did not dare to take charge of it, so twelve men from Greek colonies were selected for the work, and they embarked on a Numidian shallop at Annaba.

Then the chiefs exacted from all of the Barbarians an oath of absolute obedience. Each day the captains inspected the

clothing and shoes; even the use of shields was forbidden to the sentinels, for they often had been found to prop them against their lances and thus sleep whilst standing upright. Those who were clinging to any baggage were ordered to get rid of it; everything, according to Roman custom, must be carried on the back. As a precaution against the elephants Mâtho organized a corps of panoplied cavalry, in which both man and horse were concealed under a cuirass of hippopotamus-hide bristling with nails; and to protect the horses' hoofs, they wore shoes of plaited esparto-grass.

It was forbidden to pillage the villages, or to tyrannise over the inhabitants of non-Punic race. As the country was becoming exhausted, Mâtho ordered the distribution of rations to the soldiers individually, without heeding the women; at first the men shared with them, and from lack of sufficient food, many became weak. It was the occasion of incessant quarrels and invectives, many attracting the companions of others by bribes, or even by the promise of their rations. Seeing this, Mâtho commanded that all the women should be driven away without pity. They took refuge in the camp of Autharitus; but the women of the Gauls and Libyans treated them so abominably that they were compelled to leave.

At length they arrived under the walls of Carthage, imploring the protection of Ceres and of Proserpine; for there were in Byrsa a temple and priests, consecrated to these goddesses, in expiation of the horrors committed formerly during the siege of Syracuse. The Syssites, alleging their right to all strays, claimed the youngest to sell; and the New-Carthaginians took some of the blonde Lacedæmonian women in marriage.

Others of the women persistently followed the armies. They ran on the flank of the syntagmata beside the captains. They called to their men, and pulled them by their cloaks, struck themselves on their breasts as they uttered curses, and held out at arm's length their crying naked little babies. This sight weakened the hearts of the Barbarians; the women were obviously a hindrance, even a peril. Frequently they were rudely pushed back, but they would obstinately return. Mâtho ordered the

cavalry of Narr' Havas to charge them with their lances, and when the Balearic warriors cried out to him that they must have women—"But I myself have none!" he replied.

The genius of Moloch possessed him. Despite the rebellion of his conscience, he executed frightful deeds, and imagined that in so doing he obeyed the voice of a god. When he could not ravage the fields, he threw stones into them to render them unfruitful.

By continual messages he pressed Autharitus and Spendius to hasten on. But the operations of the Suffete were incomprehensible. He encamped successively at Eidous, at Monchar, at Tehent; the scouts believed that they espied him in the direction of Ischiil, near the frontier of Narr' Havas's dominion; and it was rumoured that he had crossed the stream above Tebourba, as if to return to Carthage. Scarcely was he in one place, when he moved to another. The routes that he followed always remained unknown. Without giving battle, the Suffete held his advantages; while pursued by the Barbarians, he seemed to lead them on.

These marches and counter-marches were still more wearing to the Carthaginians; and Hamilcar's forces, not being renewed, diminished day by day. The people from the country brought provisions to him more reluctantly. Everywhere he met hesitation, a taciturn hatred; and in spite of his supplications to the Grand Council no help came from Carthage.

Some said—and perhaps believed—that he did not require succour. It was a ruse, or a useless complaint, and Hanno's partisans, in order to do an ill office to Hamilcar, exaggerated the extent of his victory. The troops that he had they were content to sacrifice, but they were not going to go on supplying all his demands. The war was quite expensive enough! it had cost too much; and, actuated by pride, the patricians of his faction supported him half-heartedly.

Then, despairing of the Republic, Hamilcar forcefully requisitioned from the tribes for all that was needed for the war: grain, oil, wood, animals, and men. The inhabitants were not long in taking to flight as a result of these demands. The vil-

lages that he traversed were deserted, cabins were ransacked fruitlessly, and soon a frightful solitude enveloped the Punic army.

The Carthaginians were furious; they pillaged the provinces, filled up the cisterns, burned the houses, the sparks setting fire to entire forests, bordering the valleys with a crown of flames: and the troops could not march on until they had subsided. Then they resumed their march under the full sun, over the hot ashes.

In the bushes by the roadside, they sometimes saw what seemed to be the gleaming eyes of a tiger-cat. It was a Barbarian crouching on his haunches, daubed with dust that he might blend with the colour of the foliage. Or when they went along a ravine, those who were on the wings would suddenly hear stones rolling, and, lifting their eyes, would perceive in the opening of the gorge a bare-footed man fleetly bounding by.

Inasmuch as the Mercenaries did not besiege them again, Utica and Hippo-Zarytus were free. Hamilcar commanded them to come to his aid. Not caring to compromise themselves, they replied by vague words, compliments, and excuses.

He abruptly marched northward, determined to obtain possession of one of the Tyrian towns, even if he had to besiege it. It was necessary for him to have a station on the coast in order to draw supplies and soldiers from the islands, or from Cyrene, and he coveted the port of Utica as being the nearest to Carthage.

The Suffete accordingly left Zouitin, and cautiously skirted the lake of Hippo-Zarytus. But soon he was obliged to extend his regiments in a column, to climb up the mountain separating the two valleys. At sunset they descended into its summit, hollowed out like a funnel; suddenly they perceived before them, level with the ground, bronze she-wolves, which appeared to be running over the grass.

Then large plumes rose into view; and to the rhythm of flutes a formidable chant burst forth. It was the army commanded by Spendius: for the Campanians and Greeks, in their abhorrence of Carthage, had adopted Roman ensigns. At the

same time on the left appeared long pikes, shields of leopard's skin, linen cuirasses, and naked shoulders. They were Mâtho's Iberians, Lusitanians, Balearics, and Gætulians; the neighing of the horses of Narr' Havas was heard: they spread around the hill. Then came the irregular mob commanded by Autharitus, made up of Gauls, Libyans, and Nomads; and in their midst the Eaters-of-Unclean-Things could be recognized by the fish-bones they wore in their hair.

Thus the Barbarians had so exactly regulated their marches that they came together simultaneously. But, surprised themselves, they halted for some minutes motionless, and consulted.

The Suffete had collected his men in an orbicular mass, so as to offer an equal resistance on all sides. Their high-pointed shields, stuck in the turf one against another, surrounded the infantry. The Clinabarians remained outside; and further off, at intervals, the elephants were stationed. The Mercenaries were exhausted with fatigue: it would be better to wait until the following day; and, sure of their victory, the Barbarians occupied themselves during the entire night in eating.

They lighted immense bright fires which, while dazzling them, left the Punic army beneath them in the shade. Hamilcar caused a trench to be excavated Roman fashion around his encampment, fifteen feet wide and ten cubits deep; and a parapet to be massed up with the earth thus dug out, on which were planted interlacing sharp stakes. At sunrise the Mercenaries were amazed to behold the Carthaginians thus entrenched as in a fortress.

They recognized Hamilcar in the midst of the tents walking about giving orders. His body was encased in a brown cuirass fashioned of small scales. He was followed by his horse, and from time to time he stopped, pointing out some object with his right arm.

Then more than one recalled similar mornings when amid the din of clarions he had passed slowly before them, and how his looks had fortified them as cups of wine. A kind of tenderness seized them. But those who did not know Hamilcar were delirious with joy at having trapped him.

Still, if all attacked at the same time they would inflict mutual damage in the narrow space. The Numidians might charge across, but the Clinabarians, protected by their cuirasses, would crush them; then how could they pass the palisades? As for the elephants, they were not sufficiently trained.

"You are all cowards!" cried Mâtho.

And with picked troops he dashed against the entrenchments. A volley of stones repulsed them, for the Suffete had seized the catapults they had abandoned on the bridge.

This defeat abruptly turned the unstable spirit of the Barbarians. Their excessive bravado disappeared; they wished to conquer, but with the smallest possible risk. Spendius advised that they should carefully guard the position they had secured, and starve out the Punic army. But the Carthaginians began to dig wells, and as mountains surrounded the hill they discovered water.

From the tops of their palisades they fired arrows, hurled earth, dung, and stones, which they picked up from the ground; whilst the six catapults were constantly wheeled up and down the entrenchment.

But it was obvious that the springs would dry up, the provisions become exhausted, and the catapults wear out; the Mercenaries were ten times their number, and would certainly triumph in the end. As a subterfuge to gain time, the Suffete opened negotiations, and one morning the Barbarians found within their lines a sheep-skin covered with writing. He defended his victory: the Elders had forced him into the war; and, to show them that he was as good as his word, he now offered to them the plunder of Utica or Hippo-Zarytus, whichever they chose. Hamilcar, in conclusion, declared that he did not fear them, because he had won over some traitors, and with their help he would easily make an end of them all.

The Barbarians were troubled; this offer of immediate booty made them ponder; they feared treason, not suspecting a snare in the boasting of the Suffete; and they began to regard each other with distrust. Every word was observed, every movement watched; and at night they were kept awake by fear.

Many left their comrades, following their personal fancy in choosing the army to which they attached themselves: and the Gauls with Autharitus joined the men of the Cisalpine province, whose language they understood.

The four chiefs conferred every night in Mâtho's tent, and, squatting around a shield, they attentively moved back and forth the little wooden dummies, invented by Pyrrhus for representing military manœuvres. Spendius would show the resources of Hamilcar, entreating them by all the gods not to throw away this opportunity. Mâtho in vexation walked about gesticulating. For him the war against Carthage was a personal affair, and he felt indignant that the others interfered without being willing to obey him. Autharitus divined his words from his face, and applauded. Narr' Havas raised his chin as a sign of disdain; not one measure was offered but he judged it fatal. Mâtho smiled no more: sighs escaped him as if he were suppressing back the anguish of an impossible dream, the despair of a frustrated enterprise.

While the Barbarians were deliberating uncertainly, the Sufete increased his defences, dug a second trench on the inside of the palisades, erected a second wall, and constructed wooden towers at the corners; his slaves went to the middle of the advance-posts to bury caltrops in the ground. But the elephants, who were on short rations, struggled in their shackles. To conserve the fodder, he ordered the Clinabarians to kill the weakest of the stallions. Some of the men refused to comply, and were at once beheaded. The horses were eaten. The memory of this fresh meat was a great sorrow in the days that followed.

From the bottom of the amphitheatre, where the Punic army was confined, they saw all around them on the heights the four busy Barbarian camps. Women moved about balancing leathern bottles on their heads; goats wandered bleating under the stacks of pikes; the sentinels were going on or off duty, and men were eating around the tripods. In fact, the various tribes furnished them with abundant supplies, and they had no idea how greatly their inaction disturbed the Punic army.

From the second day, the Carthaginians had noticed in the

Nomad camp a troop of three hundred men remote from the others. They were the Rich, held as prisoners since the beginning of the war.

The Libyans stood them up on the edge of the ditch, and, posted back of them, hurled their javelins from behind the rampart of their bodies. Scarcely could these wretched creatures be recognized, to such a degree were their faces disfigured by vermin and filth. Their hair had been pulled out in spots, revealing ulcers on their scalps; and they were so thin and hideous that they resembled mummies in tattered shrouds. Some trembled and sobbed in a stupid manner; others screamed out to their friends to fire upon the Barbarians.

There was one among the prisoners perfectly motionless, with head bent, and speaking no word; his flowing white beard reached to his hands, which were covered with chains; and the Carthaginians sensed the decline of the Republic in their very hearts. Though the place was dangerous they crowded to see him. Someone had placed on his head a grotesque tiara, made of hippopotamus-hide studded over with pebbles. This had been a fancy of Autharitus that was thoroughly displeasing to Mâtho.

Hamilcar was infuriated, and ordered the palisades to be opened, determined to cut a way at any cost, and in a mad rush the Carthaginians charged half-way up, about three hundred paces. Such a torrent of Barbarians poured down that they were driven back on their own lines.

One of the Guards of the Legion was left outside, having stumbled over the stones. Zarxas ran up, knocked him down, and plunged his dagger into his throat; he drew out the weapon and threw himself upon the wound—gluing his lips to it with grunts of joy and wild starts that shook him to his very toes, he sucked the blood in deep draughts, then calmly sat on the body with face uplifted, holding his head back to inhale the air, like a hind that has just drunk from a torrent. In a shrill voice he broke into a Balearic song, a vague melody, full of prolonged modulations, breaking off and alternating like echoes answering echoes in the mountains; he called upon his dead brothers and invited them to a feast; then he let his hands fall

listlessly between his knees, slowly bent his head and wept. This atrocity filled the Barbarians, and especially the Greeks, with horror.

After this, the Carthaginians made no sortie; but they had no thought of surrender, knowing that they would perish under tortures.

Meanwhile, despite Hamilcar's care, the provisions decreased frightfully. For each man there remained not more than ten *k'homme* of corn, three *hin* of millet, and twelve *betza* of dried fruits. No more meat, oil, or salt provisions, not one grain of barley for the horses; they could be seen stretching their emaciated necks in search of trampled bits of straw amid the dust.

Often the sentinels patrolling the terrace would see in the moonlight one of the Barbarian's dogs prowling through heaps of filth below the entrenchments. They would fell it with a stone, and then, by the aid of the straps on their shields, let themselves over the edge of the palisade, and devour it without a word. Occasionally a horrible baying would be heard, and the man never returned. In the fourth dilochia of the twelfth syntagma, three phalangites quarrelling about a rat killed one another with blows of their knives.

All longed for their families and their homes: the poor for their cabins shaped like beehives with shells placed at the thresholds, and a net suspended outside; and the patricians for their grand halls full of bluish shadows, wherein, during the warmest hour of the day, they sought repose, listening to the indistinct voices in the street, mingled with the rustling of leaves stirred by the breeze in their gardens, and, the better to enter into these reveries and thoroughly enjoy them, they half-closed their eyelids; to be awakened by the shock of a wound.

Every moment there was some skirmish, some new alarm; the towers blazed, the Eaters-of-Unclean-Things leaped upon the palisades—their hands were chopped off with axes; others ran up; a hail of iron fell upon the tents. Galleries of reed screens were erected to protect them from the projectiles. The Carthaginians shut themselves up and refused to stir.



THERE WAS NOT A VAGABOND SO LOW THAT HE COULD NOT CORRECT
HAMILCAR'S MILITARY ERRORS

Daily, at an early hour, the sun deserted the depth of the gorge and left them in shadow. In front and behind rose the grey slopes of earth, covered with stones spotted with scanty lichens, and overhead the sky, forever cloudless, spread out more steely cold to the eye than a metal cupola. Hamilcar was so enraged against Carthage that he felt strongly disposed to join the Barbarians and lead them against her. Besides, now even the porters, the sutlers, and slaves began to murmur; and neither the people, the Grand Council, nor anyone sent a word of hope. The situation was unbearable, and especially so because of the fear that it would become worse.

At the news of the disaster Carthage throbbed with anger and hatred; the citizens perhaps would have execrated the Suffete less if early in the war he had allowed himself to be vanquished.

But there was neither time nor money to hire other Mercenaries. As for recruiting soldiers in the town, how could they equip them? Hamilcar had already taken all the weapons! And who would command new troops? The best captains were with him. Meanwhile, messengers despatched by the Suffete arrived in the streets and cried out for help. The Grand Council was disturbed, and saw to it that they disappeared.

This was an unnecessary precaution: all accused Barca for having acted with too much leniency. He should have annihilated the Mercenaries after his victory. Why had he ravished the tribes? They had already made sacrifices enough! And the patricians repented their contribution of fourteen shekels, the Syssites theirs of two hundred and twenty-three thousand kikar of gold; while those who had given nothing lamented as bitterly as the others.

The populace was jealous of the new Carthaginians, to whom Hamilcar had promised full civic rights; and even the Ligurians, who had fought so bravely, were confounded with the Barbarians, and like them were cursed; their race became a crime, the sign of complicity. The shopkeepers on the doorsills of

their shops, journeymen who walked about with their leaden rules in their hands, pedlars of pickle rinsing their baskets, bathmen in the vapour baths, and the vendors of hot drinks, all discussed the management of the campaign. With their fingers they traced plans of battle in the dust; and there was not a vagabond so low that he could not correct Hamilcar's military errors.

The priests averred that all his misfortunes were a punishment for his long impiety. He had offered no holocausts, he had not purified his troops, he had even refused to take augurs with him; and the scandal of the sacrilege intensified the violence of restrained hatreds, the rage of hopes betrayed. They recalled the disaster of Sicily, and all the burden of his pride that they had borne so long. The colleges of pontiffs could not pardon him for seizing their treasure, and they exacted from the Grand Council a pledge to crucify him should he ever return.

This year the heat of the month of Eloul, which was most excessive, was another calamity. From the lake shore nauseous odors arose and were diffused through the atmosphere with the smoke of the spices rising from the street corners. The sound of hymns was always in the air. Streams of people crowded the stairways to the temples; the walls were draped with black veils; tapers burned constantly in front of the *Dii-Pataeci*; and the blood of the camels slaughtered as sacrifices ran along the flights of steps, forming red cascades. Carthage was stirred with a funereal delirium. From the depths of the narrowest alleys, and from the blackest dens, pale faces appeared—men with profiles like vipers, who gnashed their teeth. The shrill screams of women filled the dwellings and, escaping through the lattices, made those who stood chatting in the squares turn around. Sometimes it was believed that the Barbarians were coming: they had been seen behind the Hot-Springs Mountain. Then it was rumoured that they were encamped at Tunis. And the voices multiplied, swelling till they were merged in one confused clamour. Then a universal silence would reign. Some of the people remained clinging to the pediments of the edifices,

with one hand shielding their eyes, while others, lying flat at the foot of the ramparts, strained their ears. The fear having passed, their fury broke out afresh. But the knowledge of their impotence soon threw them back into the same profound melancholy.

It redoubled every evening, when all, ascending the terraces, uttered, while bowing nine times, a vast cry of salutation to the sun as it sank slowly behind the Lagoon, then suddenly disappeared in the mountains in the direction of the Barbarians.

They were anticipating the thrice holy feast, when from the top of a pyre an eagle soared toward the sky—a symbol of the resurrection of the year, a message from the people to its supreme Baal which they regarded as a kind of union, a means of attaching themselves to the majesty of the Sun.

Filled as they were with hatred, the people naturally turned toward Moloch, the Man-Slayer, and all deserted Tanit. In effect, the Rabbetna, no longer possessing her veil, was despoiled of a part of her power. She refused the blessing of her waters. She had forsaken Carthage; she was a deserter, an enemy. Some, to insult her, threw stones at her. But even while cursing many pitied her. She was still cherished, and perhaps more intensely than ever.

All their misfortunes came from the rape of the Zaïmph. Salammbô had indirectly participated in this crime; therefore she was included in the same bitterness; she must be punished. The vague idea of an immolation quickly circulated amongst the people. To appease the Baalim, undoubtedly they must offer something of incalculable value—a beautiful being, young, a virgin of an ancient family, descended from the gods—a human Star.

Daily strange men invaded the gardens of Megara, and the slaves, fearing for themselves, did not dare resist them. However, they did not pass on to the stairway of the galleys, but always stopped below with eyes raised to the last terrace; they waited for Salammbô, and for hours cried out against her, like dogs baying at the moon.

X: T H E

S E R P E N T



THE daughter of Hamilcar was not alarmed by the clamourings of the populace; she was troubled by loftier anxieties—for her great serpent, the black python, was languishing: and for the Carthaginians a serpent was not only a national but a personal fetich. They believed every serpent to be an offspring of the slime of the earth, inasmuch as it emerged from the depths, and needed no feet to walk upon; its movements were as the undulations of streams; its temperature was ancient darkness, clammy and fecund; and the orb that it described when biting its own tail, the complete planetary system, the intelligence of Eschmoûn.

Salammbô's serpent had many times of late refused the four living sparrows offered to it at the new and full of each moon. Its beautiful skin, covered like the firmament with spots of gold on a dead black surface, was now yellow, flabby, wrinkled, and too large for its body; over its head was spreading a downy mould; and in the corners of its eyes appeared little red spots that seemed to move.

Salammbô repeatedly drew near to its silver filigree basket, and drew aside the purple curtain, the lotus leaves and bird's down—but it was continually coiled upon itself, stiller than a withered vine. As a result of her intense observation she ended

by feeling in her heart a spiral like another serpent, which was gradually rising up to her throat and strangling her.

She was in despair at having seen the Zäimph; and yet she felt a sort of joy, a peculiar pride. A mystery eluded her in the splendour of its folds; it was the mist surrounding the gods, the secret of universal existence; and Salammbô, while horrified at herself, regretted that she had not raised it.

Almost always now, she crouched on the floor of her apartment, her hands clasped around her left knee, her mouth half open, chin sunken, and eyes fixed. With terror she recalled her father's face. She longed to make a pilgrimage in the mountains of Phœnicia, to the temple of Aphaka, where Tanit had descended in the form of a star. All manner of imaginations allured and alarmed her; besides, each day a greater solitude environed her. She did not even know what had become of Hamilcar.

Wearied of her thoughts, she would rise; and the soles of her tiny sandals would clatter against her heels at every step as she walked at random around the large, silent room. The amethysts and topazes in the ceiling quivered here and there in luminous points, and Salammbô, as she walked, turned her head slightly to view them. She took the suspended amphoras by their necks; she refreshed herself under the broad fans, or amused herself by burning cinnamon in hollowed pearls.

At sunset Taanach would draw back the lozenges of black felt which closed the openings in the wall; then Salammbô's doves, rubbed with musk like the doves of Tanit, flew into her presence, and their pink feet slipped over the glass pavement amid the grains of barley which Salammbô scattered to them in handfuls, like a sower in a field. But in a moment she would burst out in sobs, and remain stretched out full length on the great couch of cow-hide straps, motionless, repeating one word, always the same, with wide-open eyes, pale as death, insensible, cold; and yet she could hear the cries of the apes in the clumps of palm trees, and the continuous grinding of the great wheel which lifted a stream of pure water through the house up into the porphyry basin.

Sometimes she refused to eat for several days. She dreamed that she saw dim stars passing beneath her feet. She would summon Schahabarim; and when he came she had nothing to say to him.

She could not live without the comfort of his presence; but her spirit rebelled against this domination; she felt for the priest, at the same time, terror, jealousy, hatred, and an emotion akin to love, in recognition of the singular delight she experienced whenever she found herself near to him.

He had recognised the influence of Rabbet, skilled as he was to distinguish the gods who sent illnesses; and to cure Salammbô he had her room sprinkled with lotions of vervain and maidenhair, and ordered that she should eat mandrake every morning, and sleep with her head on a sachet of aromatics mixed by the pontiffs. He had even employed hazelwort, a fiery-coloured root, by which fatal spirits are driven back in the north. Finally, turning toward the polar star, he thrice murmured the mysterious name of Tanit. But Salammbô remained ill, and her anguish deepened.

No one in Carthage was as learned as this priest. In his youth he had studied in the college of the Mogbeds at Borsippa, near Babylon; then had visited Samothrace, Pessinus, Ephesus, Thessaly, Judea, and the temples of the Nabathæans, which are lost in the sands; and on foot he had traversed the banks of the Nile, from the cataracts to the sea. With his face veiled, and waving torches, he had cast a black cock on a fire of sandarack before the breast of the Sphinx—Father-of-Terror. He had descended into the caverns of Proserpine; he had watched the five hundred columns of Lemnos revolve, and had seen the brightness of the candelabrum of Tarentum, which carried on its standards as many sconces as there are days in the year. Sometimes at night he would receive Greeks to question them. The constitution of the world concerned him no less than the nature of the gods; with the armillary placed in the portico of Alexandria he had observed the equinoxes, and had accompanied as far as Cyrene the bematists of Euergates, who measured the heavens by calculating the number of their paces. So now there

was growing up in his mind an individual religion, with no defined formula, and for this very reason full of ecstasies and fervour. He no longer believed that the earth was shaped like a pine-cone; he believed it to be round, and eternally falling in space at so prodigious a speed that no one could perceive its fall.

From the position of the sun above the moon, he came to believe in the predominance of Baal; the orb was only his reflection and visage. Moreover, all terrestrial things which he then saw forced him to recognise as supreme the male exterminating principle. Then he secretly held Rabbet responsible for the misfortune of his life. Was it not for her that the grand pontiff had advanced amid a tumult of cymbals and taken his future virility? And with a melancholy gaze he followed the men who abandoned themselves to pleasures with the priestesses in the depths of the turpentine groves.

His days were spent in inspecting the censers and gold vases, tongs and rakes used for the ashes of the altar, and all the costumes of the statues, even to the bronze pins used to curl the hair of an old Tanit in the third chapel, close to the emerald vine. Regularly at certain hours he raised before the same entrances the grand tapestries, which fell back behind him again. He remained with his arms open in the same attitude, prayed prostrated upon the same stones; and about him, through the lobbies filled with eternal twilight, moved only a population of barefooted priests.

But over the aridity of his life Salammbô bloomed like a flower in the cleft of a sepulchre. Yet he was harsh to her, and spared her neither penances nor bitter speeches. His condition established between them the equality of a common sex; and yet he was less disturbed by being unable to possess the young girl than by finding her so fair and, above all, so pure. Often he saw that she wearied, trying in vain to follow his thoughts. Then he turned away sadly, and felt himself more forsaken, more lonely, and more useless.

Strange words frequently escaped him, and passed before Salammbô like broad flames illuminating abysses. It would be night, on her terrace, when alone these two would observe the

stars, while Carthage spread itself below their feet, and the gulf and open sea were vaguely obscured in the colour of the darkness.

He revealed to her the theory of souls which descended on the earth, following the same route as the sun through the signs of the zodiac. With extended arm he pointed out in Aries the entrance of the human generation; in Capricorn the return toward the gods; and Salammbô strove to perceive them, for she took these conceptions for realities, accepting as realities pure symbols, and even figures of speech, a distinction no longer clearly defined even to the priest.

"The souls of the dead," he said, "resolve themselves into the moon as do the corpses into the earth. Their tears compose her humidity; it is a dark abode full of mire, wrecks and tempests."

She asked what then would become of her.

"At first you will languish, light as a vapour that floats on the waves; and after trials and most prolonged agonies, you will enter the centre of the sun, the very source of Intelligence!"

As he did not mention Tanit, Salammbô imagined he refrained through shame for his vanquished goddess, and therefore called her by a commonplace name, that designated the moon. But she continued to pour forth blessings upon the planet so fertile and benign. At last he exclaimed:

"No! no! she draws from the sun all her fruitfulness! Have you not seen her wandering around him like an amorous woman who runs after a man in a field?"—and unceasingly he exalted the virtues of light.

Far from lessening her mystic desires, on the contrary, he stimulated them, and he even seemed to take pleasure in troubling her by his revelations of a pitiless doctrine. Salammbô, despite the throes of her love, threw herself upon them with rapture.

But the more Schahabarim felt doubts concerning Tanit the more he desired to believe in her. In the depths of his soul remorse checked him. It was necessary that he should have some

proof, a manifestation of the gods; and in the hope to obtain such, he devised an undertaking that should at the same time save his country and his belief.

He now began to deplore the great sacrilege, in Salammbô's presence, and to dwell upon the misfortunes it had caused, even in the heavenly regions. Then abruptly he announced the peril threatening the Suffete, who was assailed by three armies commanded by Mâtho—for, because of Mâtho's possession of the veil, he was in the eyes of the Carthaginians king of the Barbarians; and he added that the preservation of the Republic, as well as her father, depended upon her alone.

"Upon me!" she exclaimed. "What can I do?"

But the priest, with a smile of disdain, said:

"You will never consent!"

She entreated him to explain. Finally Schahabarim said to her:

"You must go to the Barbarians' camp and bring back the Zaïmph."

She sank down upon the ebony stool, and remained with her arms stretched out between her knees, shuddering throughout her entire frame like a victim at the foot of an altar awaiting the blow of the axe. Her temples throbbed; she saw circles of fire burning before her eyes, and in her stupor comprehended nothing more than that she soon must die.

But if Rabbetna triumphed—if the Zaïmph was recovered and Carthage delivered—of what importance the life of one woman! thought Schahabarim. Besides, she might perhaps obtain the veil and not perish.

For three days he stayed away from her; the evening of the fourth day she sent for him.

To inflame her heart more surely, he reported all the invectives that were openly hurled in the Council upon Hamilcar; he told her she had sinned, and that she should make reparation for her crime; that Rabbetna commanded this sacrifice.

A great clamour swept over the Mappals, and reached Megara. Schahabarim and Salammbô went quickly out, and looked from the top of the galley stairway.

It was occasioned by people congregated in the square of Khamoûn, who were crying out for arms. The Elders did not wish to furnish them, considering the effort futile; others who had gone without a general had been massacred. At last the crowd was permitted to sally forth; and as a kind of homage to Moloch, or a vague wish for destruction, they pulled up large cypress trees from the temple groves, and having lighted them by the torches of the Kabyri, carried them through the streets while they sang. These monstrous flames advanced swaying gently, casting reflections on the glass globes at the crest of the temples, on the ornaments of the colossi, on the beakheads of the ships, passing beyond the terraces, and appearing like suns revolving in the city. They descended the Acropolis. The gate of Malqua opened.

"Are you ready?" exclaimed Schahabarim, "or have you told them to say to your father that you have forsaken him?" She hid her face in her veil, and the great lights receded, gradually sinking to the edge of the waves.

An indefinable terror held her; she was afraid of Moloch, afraid of Mâtho. That man of giant stature, who was master of the Zaïmph, dominated Rabbetna, even as did the Baal, and he appeared to her surrounded with the same splendours. Then she remembered that the spirit of the gods sometimes visited the bodies of men. Had not Schahabarim, in speaking of him, declared that she ought to conquer Moloch? They were confused the one with the other: she confounded them: both pursued her.

Wishing to know the future, she approached her serpent—for auguries were often drawn from the positions of serpents. The basket was empty. Salammbô was troubled.

She found it coiled up by its tail to one of the silver balustrades near the suspended couch, rubbing itself, to get free from its old yellowish skin; meanwhile its body, shining and bright, was gradually appearing, like a blade being drawn from the scabbard.

The following days, in proportion as she allowed herself

to be convinced and was more disposed to succour Tanit, the python grew better and larger, and seemed to revive.

The certainty that Schahabarim expressed the will of the gods established itself in her conscience. One morning she arose with determination, and asked the priest what she would have to do to compel Mâtho to give back the veil.

"Demand it," said Schahabarim.

"But if he refuses?"

The priest gazed at her attentively, and with such a smile as she had never before seen.

"Yes; what shall I do?" repeated Salammbô.

He rolled between his fingers the ends of the bandlets that fell down from his tiara over his shoulders, his eyes downcast; finally perceiving that she did not comprehend, he said: "You will be alone with him."

"And then?"

"Alone in his tent."

"And what then?"

Schahabarim bit his lips; he sought for some indefinite phrase.

"If you are to die it will be later," said he; "much later!" fear nothing! and whatever he attempts, do not call out! do not be frightened! You must be humble, you understand, and submissive to his desire, for it is ordained of Heaven!"

"But the veil?"

"The gods will care for it," responded Schahabarim.

She added: "Oh, father, if you would only accompany me?"

"No!"

He made her kneel, and keeping her left hand raised and her right one extended, he swore in her behalf to bring back to Carthage the veil of Tanit. With fearful imprecations, she consecrated herself to the gods, and each time that Schahabarim pronounced a word she tremblingly repeated it.

He indicated to her all the purifications and fasts she ought to perform, and what paths to follow, in order to reach Mâtho's tent; besides, he told her that a servitor familiar with the roads should accompany her.

She felt herself freed. She dreamed of naught but the happiness of finding the Zaïmph; and now she blessed Schahabarim for his exhortations.

The doves of Carthage at this season migrated to the mountain of Eryx in Sicily, there nesting about the temple of Venus. Previous to their departure, during many days, they sought each other, and cooed to reunite themselves; finally one evening they flew away, driven by the wind, and the large, white cloud blew across the heavens very high above the sea.

The horizon was crimson. They seemed gradually to descend to the waves, then to disappear as if swallowed up and falling, of their own accord, into the jaws of the sun. Salammbô, who watched them go, drooped her head. Taanach, believing that she surmised her mistress's grief, tenderly said: "But, mistress, they will return."

"Yes! I know it."

"And you will see them again."

"Perhaps!" Salammbô said, as she sighed.

She had not confided her resolution to anyone, and for its secret accomplishment she sent Taanach to purchase, in the suburbs of Kinisdo (instead of requiring them of the stewards), all the articles she required: vermilion, aromatics, a linen girdle, and new garments. The old slave was amazed at these preparations, but dared not ask any questions; and so the day arrived fixed by Schahabarim for Salammbô's departure.

Toward the twelfth hour, she perceived at the end of the sycamores an old blind man, who rested one hand on the shoulder of a child who walked before him, and in the other hand he held, against his hip, a species of cithara made of black wood.

The eunuchs, the slaves, the women had been sent away; no one could possibly know the mystery that was being prepared.

Taanach lighted in the corners of the room four tripods full of *strobos* and cardamom, then she spread out great Babylonian tapestries, and hung them on cords all round the room—

for Salammbô did not wish to be seen even by the walls. The player of the kinnor waited crouching behind the door, and the young boy, standing up, applied a reed flute to his lips. In the distance the clamour of the streets died away, the violet shadows lengthened before the peristyles of the temples, and on the other side of the gulf the base of the mountain, the olive fields, and the waste yellow ground undulated, till they finally blended in a bluish vapour; not a sound could be heard, and an indescribable oppression filled the air.

Salammbô crouched on the onyx step on the edge of the porphyry basin; she lifted her wide sleeves, fastening them behind her shoulders, and began her ablutions in a methodical manner, according to the sacred rites.

Next Taanach brought to her an alabaster phial, in which was something liquid, yet coagulated; it was the blood of a black dog, strangled by barren women on a winter night amid the ruins of a sepulchre. She rubbed it on her ears, her heels, and the thumb of her right hand, and even the nail remained tinged a trifle red, as if she had crushed a berry. The moon rose, and then the cithara and the flute began to play. Salammbô removed her earrings, her necklace, bracelets, and her long white simar; unknotted the fillet from her hair, and for some minutes shook her tresses gently over her shoulders to refresh and disentangle them. The music outside continued; there were always the same three notes, precipitous and furious; the strings grated, the flute was high-sounding and sonorous. Taanach marked time by striking her hands; Salammbô, with a swaying of her entire body, chanted her prayers, and one by one her garments fell around her on the floor.

The heavy tapestry trembled, and above the cord that sustained it the head of the python appeared. He descended slowly, like a drop of water trickling along a wall, and glided between the stuffs scattered about, then poised himself on his tail; suddenly he lifted himself perfectly straight, and darted his eyes, more brilliant than crimson carbuncles, upon Salammbô.

A shudder of cold, or a feeling of modesty perhaps, at first made her hesitate. But she recalled the order of Schahabarim,

so she advanced; the python lowered himself, resting the middle of his body upon the nape of her neck, allowing his head and tail to hang down like a broken necklace, with the two ends trailing on the floor. Salammbô rolled them around her sides, under her arms, between her knees; then taking him by the jaw, she drew his little triangular mouth close to her teeth; and with half-closed eyes she threw herself back under the moon's rays. The white light seemed to enshroud her in a silvery fog; the tracks of her wet feet shone on the flagstones; stars twinkled in the depths of the water; the serpent tightened around her his black coils, speckled with spots of gold. Salammbô panted under this great weight; her loins gave way, she felt that she was dying: the python patted her thighs softly with his tail; then the music ceased, and he fell back.

Taanach returned to Salammbô, and after arranging two candelabras, the lights of which burned in two crystal globes filled with water, she tinted with henna the inside of the hands of her mistress, touched her cheeks with vermilion, put anti-mony on her eyelids, and lengthened her eyebrows with a mixture of gum, musk, ebony, and crushed flies' feet.

Salammbô, sitting in a chair mounted with ivory, abandoned herself to the care of her slave. But the soothing touches, the odour of the aromatics, and the fasts she had kept, enervated her: she became so pale that Taanach paused.

"Continue!" said Salammbô; and as she drew herself up in spite of her fatigue, she felt all at once reanimated. Then an impatience seized her; she urged Taanach to hasten her movements, and the old slave growled: "Well! well! mistress! . . . You have no one waiting for you!"

"Yes!" responded Salammbô, "someone waits for me."

Taanach started with surprise, and in order to learn more, she said: "What do you order me to do, mistress, if you should remain away?" . . . But Salammbô sobbed, and the slave exclaimed:

"You are ill! What is it? Do not go! Take me! When you were a little one and wept, I held you to my heart and made you laugh by tickling you with my nipples. Mistress, you



THE SERPENT TIGHTENED AROUND HER HIS BLACK COILS

sucked them dry." And she struck her withered breasts. "Now I am old! I can do nothing for you! You do not love me any more! You hide your troubles from me, you despise your nurse!" With fondness and vexation the tears coursed down her face, in the scars of her tattooing.

"No!" said Salammbô, "no; I love you; be comforted!"

Taanach, with a smile like the grimace of an old ape continued her task. Following the directions of the priest, Salammbô ordered her slave to make her magnificent. Taanach complied, with a barbaric taste full of elaboration and ingenuity.

Over a first fine wine-coloured tunic she placed a second one, embroidered with birds' plumes. Golden scales rested on her hips, from her wide girdle flowed the folds of her blue, silver-starred trousers. Then Taanach adjusted an ample robe of rare stuff from the land of the Seres, white, variegated with green stripes. She fastened over Salammbô's shoulders a square of purple, made heavy at the hem with beads of *sandastrum*; and on the top of all these robes she arranged a black mantle with a long train. Then she contemplated her, and proud of her work, she could not keep from saying: "You will not be fairer the day of your bridal!"

"My bridal!" repeated Salammbô in a reverie, as she leaned her elbow on the ivory chair.

Taanach held up before her mistress a copper mirror, wide and long enough for her to view herself completely. She stood up, and with a light touch of a finger put back a curl that drooped too low on her forehead. Her hair was powdered with gold dust, waved in front, hanging down her back in long twists, terminating in pearls. The light from the candelabra heightened the colour on her cheeks, the gold of her garments, and the whiteness of her skin. Around her waist, on her arms, hands, and feet she wore so many jewels that the mirror, reflecting like a sun, flashed back prismatic rays upon her: and Salammbô, standing beside Taanach, leaned and turned this way and that to view herself, smiling at the dazzling effect.

Then she walked to and fro, embarrassed by the time that she needs must wait.

Suddenly the crow of a cock was heard. Quickly she pinned a long yellow veil over her hair, passed a scarf around her neck, and thrust her feet in blue leather boots, saying to Taanach: "Go, see if there is not a man with two horses under the myrtles."

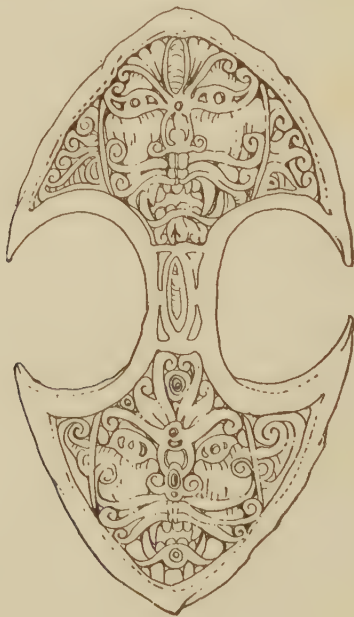
Taanach had scarcely reëntered before Salammbô was descending the stairway of the galleys.

"Mistress!" called the nurse. Salammbô turned around and placed one finger on her lips, as a sign of discretion and silence.

Taanach crept softly the length of the prow as far as the foot of the terrace, and in the distance by the moonlight she discerned in the cypress avenue a gigantic shadow moving obliquely to the left of Salammbô: this was a presage of death.

Taanach returned to her room. She flung herself upon the floor, tore her face with her finger-nails; she pulled out her hair, and uttered piercing cries at the top of her voice.

Finally the thought came to her that she might be heard; then she was quiet, sobbing very low, with her head between her hands and her face flat upon the tiles.



XI: THE

TENT



THE man who was leading Salammbô made her climb beyond the lighthouse toward the Catacombs and then down the long suburb of Molouya, full of steep lanes. The sky began to lighten. Sometimes palm-branches jutting beyond the walls obliged them to bend their heads. The two horses, walking carefully, kept slipping; and they thus arrived at the Tév-este gate.

Its heavy valves were half open; they passed through, and it shut behind them.

For some time they followed the foot of the ramparts, and at the top of the cisterns they took a road by the Tænia, a narrow ribbon of yellow land, which, separating the gulf from the lake, extended as far as Rhades.

No one was visible in or about Carthage, either on the sea or in the surrounding country. The clay-coloured waves rippled softly, as the gentle wind tossed the foam over the sweep of the breakers and flecked them with broken splashes of white. Notwithstanding her numerous wraps, Salammbô shivered in the freshness of the morning; she felt dizzy from the unaccustomed motion of the horse and the open air. Then the sun rose; its rays fell on the back of her head, and involuntarily

she became drowsy. The two horses ambled along side by side, burying their hoofs in the silent sand.

When they passed the Hot-Springs Mountain, they proceeded at a more rapid pace, as the ground was firmer.

Although it was the season for ploughing and sowing, the fields as far as the eye could see were as forsaken as a desert; heaps of grain were spread out here and there; elsewhere the reddened barley shed itself from the ear; and on the clear horizon villages showed black, with irregular and mutilated outlines.

Now and again a half-burned piece of wall stood erect on the roadside. The cabin roofs were falling in, exposing the interiors, revealing fragments of pottery, shreds of clothing, all sorts of utensils, and unrecognisable shattered objects. Frequently a being covered with rags emerged from the ruins, its face incrustated with dirt, and eyes flaming, but it always took to its heels quickly, or disappeared in a hole. Salammbô and her guide did not pause.

Deserted plains succeeded one another. Over the broad stretches of yellow earth the charcoal dust raised by their horses' hoofs spread out in uneven streaks. Sometimes they came to peaceful nooks, where a brook ran amid long grasses, and as they climbed up the opposite bank Salammbô, to refresh her hands, would pluck the wet leaves.

At the corner of a wood of laurel-roses she was nearly unseated by her horse shying at a corpse in the roadway. The slave readjusted her on the cushions. He was one of the servitors of the temple of Tanit, a man whom Schahabarim employed in perilous missions. With extreme caution he now went on foot beside her, between the two horses, now and then touching them up with the end of a leather lash, wound around his arm; or, pulling from a pannier hung on his breast balls of wheat, dates, and yolks of eggs, wrapped up in lotus leaves, he would proffer them to Salammbô, without speaking or pausing.

In the middle of the day three Barbarians dressed in animals' skins crossed their path; gradually others appeared,

wandering in bands of ten, twelve, or twenty-five, many driving she-goats or limping cows. Their heavy clubs were studded with brass points; cutlasses glittered on their filthy, savage clothing. Seeing the riders, they opened their eyes wide in menace and amazement. As they passed along, some shouted after them a commonplace benediction, others obscene pleasantries; and the guide answered each group in its own idiom, telling them that he was conducting a sick youth to be healed at a distant temple.

Meantime the day fell. The baying of a dog was heard, and they proceeded toward the sound. Through the twilight they perceived an enclosure of uncemented stones surrounding a shapeless building. A dog ran along on the wall; the slave threw a stone at it, and they entered a high, vaulted hall. In the centre a crouching woman was warming herself at a brush-wood fire, the smoke from which escaped through a hole in the roof. Her white hair fell to her knees, half concealing her, and not wishing to answer the guide, she mumbled in an idiotic manner words of vengeance against the Barbarians and the Carthaginians.

After the guide had ferreted about to right and left, he came back to the old woman, and demanded something to eat. She shook her head, keeping her eyes fixed on the fire, and murmured: "I was the hand; the ten fingers are cut off. The mouth can eat no more."

The slave showed her a handful of gold pieces; she threw herself upon them, but quickly resumed her motionless attitude.

Finally he drew a dagger from his girdle, and pressed it to her throat; whereupon she tremblingly lifted up a large slab, and brought out an amphora of wine and some fish preserved in honey from Hippo-Zarytus.

Salammbô turned away from this unclean food, and, being weary, slept on the caparisons taken from her horse and heaped in a corner of the hall.

Before daybreak the guide awoke her.

The dog was growling. The slave stole softly up behind it, and with a single blow of his dagger cut off its head. He rubbed

the blood on the horses' nostrils to reanimate them. The old hag flung a curse after them. Salammbô heard it, and pressed the amulet she wore to her heart.

They resumed their journey. From time to time she asked the guide if they should not soon reach their destination. The road led over little hills. Only the chirping of cicadas could be heard. The sun warmed the yellowed grasses. The ground was riven by crevices, which divided it into immense slabs. Sometimes a viper crawled by, or an eagle flew overhead. The guide ran alongside of Salammbô, who mused beneath her veils, and, despite the heat, refrained from casting them aside, fearful of soiling her beautiful vestments.

At regular distances towers loomed up, built by the Carthaginians for the purpose of keeping watch upon the tribes. Occasionally they entered one of these, to avail themselves of the shade, but once refreshed started on again.

The previous day, by way of precaution, they had made a wide *détour*, but now they encountered no one; the region was barren, the Barbarians had not passed that way.

Gradually the devastation began again; and sometimes in the midst of a field there appeared a tiled floor, sole relic of a vanished mansion. In the distance olive-trees, stripped of their foliage, seemed like broad thorn bushes. They passed through a town in which all the houses had been razed to the ground. Human skeletons lay along the line of the walls, as well as those of dromedaries and mules; and half-devoured carrion blocked many of the streets.

Night fell; the sky was low, and thick with clouds.

For two hours more they climbed towards the west, when all at once they perceived a number of small lights. They were gleaming from the bottom of an amphitheatre. Here and there gold plates flashed, as they moved about. These were the cuirasses of the Clinabarians in the Punic camp. Then they distinguished in the same vicinity other and more numerous lights, for the armies of the Mercenaries were now combined and massed together, covering a vast area.

Salammbô started to advance, but the guide led her further

on, and they skirted the terrace that enclosed the Barbarians' camp. A breach was discovered: the slave disappeared.

At the top of the entrenchments marched a sentinel, carrying a bow in his hand and a pike over his shoulder.

Salammbô continued to advance. The sentinel knelt down, and a long arrow pierced the end of her mantle. Then she halted motionless; he asked her what she wanted.

"To speak to Mâtho," she replied. "I am a fugitive from Carthage."

He whistled; the signal was repeated many times in the distance.

Salammbô waited; her frightened horse snorted and wheeled.

When Mâtho arrived, the moon was rising behind her, but her face was concealed under a yellow veil covered with black flowers, and so many draperies enveloped her, it was impossible to recognise her. From the top of the terrace he contemplated this vague form rising like a phantom through the evening shadows.

At length she said to him: "Conduct me to your tent. I wish it."

A recollection which he could not define passed through his memory. He felt his heart beat. This air of command intimidated him.

"Follow me!" said he.

The barrier was lowered; she was within the camp of the Barbarians.

It was alive with a great tumult and a surging crowd. Fires burned brightly under suspended camp kettles, and their crimson reflections cast weird shadows in certain places, while others remained in total darkness. People were shouting and calling on all sides; the horses were tethered in long, straight rows between the tents, that were round or square, constructed of leather or canvas; there were also reed huts, and holes dug in the ground, like burrows of animals. The soldiers were carting faggots for the fires, or were squatting on the ground, or, wrapped up in their mats, were preparing themselves for sleep;

and Salammbô's horse, in order to pass over them, sometimes was forced to stretch out its legs and leap.

Salammbô recalled having seen these very same men before; but now their beards were much longer, their faces more tanned, and their voices harsher. Mâtho walked in front of her, and waved them away with a gesture of his arm that lifted his red mantle. Some kissed his hands, others bowed down and accosted him to ask his orders, for he was now veritable and only Chief of the Barbarians: Spendius, Autharitus, and Narr' Havas had become discouraged, and he had shown such audacity and determination that all obeyed him.

Salammbô, following him, traversed the entire length of the camp, as his tent was pitched at the end, only three hundred paces from Hamilcar's entrenchments.

On the right she noticed a broad pit, and it seemed to her that faces leaned on the edge, level with the ground, resembling decapitated heads; yet their eyes moved, and from their half-opened mouths moans in the Punic language escaped.

Two Negroes, holding cressets filled with burning resin, stood on either side of Mâtho's tent. He advanced, and brusquely drawing aside the canvas, entered. She followed him. It was a deep tent, supported by a pole in the middle, and lighted by a large scone in the form of a lotus, filled with yellow oil, on which floated handfuls of burning tow; in the shadows glittered military accouterments. A naked sword leaned against a stool, beside a shield; whips of hippopotamus-hide, cymbals, little bells and collars, were thrown pell-mell into baskets of esparto-grass; crumbs of black bread soiled a felt rag; in one corner, on a round stone, copper money was carelessly heaped; and through the rents of the tent-canvas the wind swept in the dust and the scent of the elephants, which could be heard feeding and rattling their chains.

"Who are you?" demanded Mâtho.

Without replying, she slowly looked around her; and her glance was arrested at the background, where, on a bed of palm-branches, lay something bluish and scintillating.

She advanced quickly: a cry escaped her. Mâtho, behind her, stamped his foot.

"What brings you here? Why do you come?"

She replied, pointing to the Zaïmph:

"To take it!" and with the other hand she pulled the veils from her head. Mâtho recoiled, his elbows thrown back, gaping, almost terrified.

She felt that she was sustained by the power of the gods, and, confronting him squarely, she demanded the Zaïmph, claiming it with superb and eloquent words.

Mâtho did not hear: he was staring at her, and her garments, that were to him blended with her body: the sheen of the fabrics was like the splendour of her skin, something special, peculiar to her alone: her eyes and her diamonds sparkled; the polish of her finger-nails was a continuation of the lustre of the jewels that bedecked her fingers; the two clasps fastening her tunic raised her breasts a trifle and pressed them closer; and he, in a reverie, lost himself in the narrow space between them as his eye followed the slender thread to which was suspended an emerald medallion that revealed itself lower down beneath the violet gauze. As earrings she wore two tiny balances of sapphires, supporting a hollow pearl filled with liquid perfume, which percolated through minute perforations, moistening her bare shoulders. Mâtho watched it fall.

He was seized by an irresistible curiosity, and like a child who puts its hand on an unknown fruit, he tremblingly touched her lightly with the tip of his finger on the upper part of her bosom; the flesh, slightly cold, yielded with an elastic resistance.

This contact, although scarcely perceptible, penetrated Mâtho to the depths of his being. An insurrection of his whole being impelled him toward her. He desired to envelop her, absorb her, drink her. His bosom heaved, his teeth chattered.

Taking her by the wrists he gently drew her to him, and then sat down on a cuirass beside the couch of palm-branches, covered with a lion's skin. She remained standing. Thus hold-

ing her between his legs, he scanned her from head to foot, repeating: "How beautiful you are! How beautiful you are!"

His eyes continually fixed on hers annoyed her, and this embarrassment, this repugnance, increased in a manner so keen that Salammbô had to restrain herself from screaming out. The thought of Schahabarim came to her; she resigned herself.

Mâtho kept her little hands in his, and from time to time, in spite of the priest's orders, she averted her face, and tried to throw him off by shaking her arms. He dilated his nostrils to breathe more freely the perfume exhaled from her person—a fresh indefinable emanation which yet made him dizzy, like the fumes from a censer—a diffusion of honey, pepper, incense, roses, and yet another odour.

But how came she to be thus beside him in his tent, at his mercy? Someone doubtless had urged her. She had not come for the Zaïmph? His arms fell, and he bent his head, overwhelmed by a sudden reverie.

In order to touch him Salammbô said, in a plaintive voice: "What, then, have I done to you, that you wish my death?"

"Your death!" he exclaimed.

She continued: "I saw you one night, by the flames of my burning gardens, between the steaming cups and my slain slaves; and at that time your wrath was so fierce that you bounded toward me, and made me fly! Then a terror entered Carthage: cities were devastated, the countryside was put to the fire, soldiers were massacred. It is you who have ruined them! It is you who have assassinated them! I abhor you! Your name alone gnaws me like remorse! You are more execrable than the plague! Aye, than the Roman war! The provinces quake before your fury; the ditches are full of corpses! I have followed the track of your fires as if I walked behind Moloch!"

Mâtho bounded up; a tremendous pride swelled his heart; he felt himself lifted to the stature of a god.

With palpitating nostrils and clenched teeth, she continued: "As if there had not already been enough sacrilege, you came to my palace while I slept, enveloped in the Zaïmph! Your words meant nothing to me; but I saw that you desired to drag

me toward something frightful—to plunge me to the bottom of an abyss!”

Mâtho, wringing his hands, cried out: “No! no! It was to give the Zaïmph to you! To return it to you! For it seemed to me that the goddess had left her vestment for you, and that it belonged to you! In her temple or in your mansion, what matter? Are you not all-powerful, immaculate, radiant and beautiful as Tanit?” And with a look full of infinite adoration: “At least—perhaps—if you are not Tanit herself?”

“I, Tanit!” said Salammbô to herself.

They spoke no more. Thunder rumbled afar off. The sheep bleated, frightened by the storm.

“Oh! come near!” he resumed. “Come near; fear nothing! Formerly I was but a soldier, among the common Mercenaries, and even carried upon my back the wood for my comrades. Do I trouble myself about Carthage? The crowd of Carthage tosses to and fro as if lost in the dust of your sandals, and all the Carthaginian treasures, with her provinces, her waters, and her islands, do not tempt me like the freshness of your lips and the turn of your shoulders. But I wanted to pull down her walls, that I might come near to you and possess you! Besides, while I wait I revenge myself! At present, I crush men like shells. I throw myself on the phalanxes; I scatter the sarissas with my hands, and arrest the stallions by their nostrils; a catapult is powerless to kill me! Oh! if you only knew how in the midst of this war I have thought of you! Sometimes the memory of a gesture—of a fold in your garments, has suddenly seized me and entangled me like a net! I see your eyes in the flames of the fire-lances and above the gilding of the shields. I hear your voice in the sounding of the cymbals; I turn around—you are not there! And then I plunge again into the thick of battle!”

He lifted his arms, and the swollen veins intercrossed like ivy upon tree branches; the perspiration rolled down his chest between his bulging muscles, while his rapid breathing made his flanks palpitate beneath his belt of bronze, fitted with straps that hung to his knees, firmer than marble. Salammbô, accus-

tomed to eunuchs, allowed herself to be wonderstruck by this man's strength. It was the chastisement of the goddess, or the influence of Moloch, circulating around her in the five armies. Overwhelmed by a certain lassitude, she indistinctly heard through her stupor the intermittent call of the sentinels answering one another.

The flames of the lamp wavering fitfully under gusts of warm air became at moments bright flashes of light, then almost died out, intensifying the obscurity; and she saw only Mâtho's eyeballs like two glowing coals in the night. Now she felt, indeed, that a fatality encompassed her, that she had attained a supreme moment which was irrevocable, and with one effort she went toward the Zaïmph, and raised her hands to seize it.

"What are you doing?" cried Mâtho. She answered calmly: "I am taking it back with me to Carthage."

He advanced, and folded his arms with so terrible an air that she stood immediately as though riveted in her tracks.

"You return with it to Carthage!" he stammered; and repeated, grinding his teeth: "You return with it to Carthage! Ah! you came to take the Zaïmph, to conquer me, then to disappear! No! no! you belong to me! and no one can now tear you from here! Ah! I have not forgotten the insolence of your large, tranquil eyes, and how you crushed me with your haughty beauty! It is my turn now! You are my captive, my slave, my servant! Call, if you will, on your father, and his army, the Elders, the Rich, and your entire accursed people! I am the master of three hundred thousand soldiers! I will go and seek them in Lusitania, among the Gauls, and in the depths of the desert. I will overthrow your town, and burn all its temples! The triremes shall float on waves of blood! I do not choose that a single house, a stone, or a palm tree remain! And if men fail me, I will draw the bears from the mountains, and turn the lions upon your people! Do not seek to fly, or I shall kill you!"

Ghastly, and with fists clenched, he quivered like a harp with strings about to snap. Suddenly sobs suffocated him, and he sank down before her.

"Ah! forgive me, I am a wretch, viler than the scorpions, than the mud or the dust! Just now, as you were speaking, your breath passed over my face, and I revelled in it as a dying man who, prone on his face, drinks at the edge of a stream. Crush me, that I may feel your feet! Curse me, that I may hear your voice! Do not go! Have pity! I love you! I love you!"

He was on his knees on the ground before her, and he encircled her waist with his arms, his head thrown back and his hands wandering over her; the gold discs suspended from his ears shone on his bronzed throat; large tears rolled in his eyes, like silver balls; he sighed caressingly, and murmured vague speeches lighter than a breeze, sweet as a kiss.

Salammbô was overcome by a languor in which she lost all consciousness of herself. Something at once from within, and from on high, an order of the gods, forced her to yield herself; clouds uplifted her, and, fainting, she fell back on the couch in the midst of the lion's skins. Mâtho seized her feet; her golden chainlet snapped, and the two ends flew apart, striking against the tent like two leaping vipers. The Zaïmph fell and enveloped her; she saw Mâtho's face bending down over her breast.

"Moloch, thou burnest me!"

And the kisses of the soldier, more devouring than fire, ran over her. She was as if lifted up in a storm, or as consumed by the force of the sun.

He kissed all her fingers, her arms, her feet, and the long tresses of her hair from end to end.

"Take the Zaïmph," he said; "how can I resist? Take me also with it! I will desert the army. I will renounce everything! Beyond Gades, twenty days' journey by sea, there is an island covered with gold-dust, with verdure, and birds. On the mountain flowers full of smoking perfume swing like eternal censers; in citron trees taller than cedars, milk-white serpents with the diamonds of their jaws toss the fruit upon the lawns. The air is so soft that you cannot die. Aye, I will seek it; you shall see this haven. We shall live in crystal grottoes hewn out at the foot of the hills. No one inhabits this country; I shall become king."

He brushed the dust from his cothurns; then besought her to allow him to put a quarter of a pomegranate between her lips; he piled up garments behind her head to make a pillow; in fact he sought in every imaginable way to serve her, to humble himself, and even went so far as to spread over her knees the Zaïmph as if it were a simple rug.

"Have you still those little gazelle horns from which your necklaces are suspended? Give them to me! I love them!" Joyous laughter escaped him; he talked as if the war were at an end; the Mercenaries, Hamilcar, and all obstacles, had disappeared. The moon slipped between two clouds. They saw it through an opening in the tent.

"Ah! what nights I have spent in contemplating her! She seemed to me a veil which hid your face; you looked at me through it; memories of you were mingled with her rays. Then I could see you there no more!" And with his head upon her bosom, he wept freely.

"And this," she thought, "is the formidable man who makes Carthage tremble!"

Finally he slept; then, disengaging herself from his arms, she placed one foot on the ground, and she saw that her chainlet was broken.

The virgins of great families were taught to respect these little shackles as though they were religious symbols. Sallambô, blushing, rolled the two fragments of her gold chain around her ankles.

Carthage, Megara, her mansion, her room and the tract of country which she had recently traversed, rushed in whirlwinds through her memory, in images tumultuous, and yet distinct. But an abyss removed them far from her, to an infinite distance.

The storm was clearing; occasional heavy drops of rain, spattering one by one, made the tent-top sway.

Mâtho slept like a drunken man, extended on his side, one arm flung out beyond the edge of the couch; his pearl bandeau, raised a trifle, exposed his forehead. A smile parted his lips, disclosing his glittering teeth in the midst of his black beard, and in his half-closed eyes lurked a silent, almost outrageous



"TAKE THE ZAIMPH; HOW CAN I RESIST?"

gaiety. Salammbô regarded him, her head bent, her hands clasped, motionless.

By the bedside a dagger lay on a cypress branch; the sight of this shining blade inflamed her with murderous desire. Sorrowful voices came from afar through the darkness, and like a choir of spirits urged her on. She drew near and seized the haft of the weapon, but at the rustle of her robe Mâtho partially opened his eyes, moved his lips over her hands, and the dagger dropped.

Shouts burst out; a frightful light flashed behind the tent. Mâtho lifted the tent cloth; and they saw great flames sweeping the Libyan camp.

Their reed cabins were burning, the stems twisting, splintered in the smoke, flying like arrows; against the red horizon black shadows ran frantically about. Yells issued from those within the cabins; the elephants, the cattle, and the horses leaped and plunged among the distracted crowd, crushing the soldiers with the munitions and baggage that they dragged out of the fire. Trumpets sounded. Voices called out: "Mâtho! Mâtho!" Men were at the door, trying to enter.

"Come! come! Hamilcar is burning the camp of Autharitus."

At this he made one bound. Salammbô now found herself alone.

Then she examined the Zaïmph; after she had contemplated it well, she was surprised not to experience that degree of happiness she had formerly thought would be hers. She remained melancholy before her realised dream.

Just then the edge of the tent was lifted and a hideous form appeared. At first Salammbô could discern only two eyes, and a long white beard which hung down to the ground, for the rest of the body, entangled in the rags of a tawny garment, trailed along the earth; and at every forward movement the two hands were buried in his beard, and then fell back. Crawling thus he gradually arrived at Salammbô's feet, and she recognised the aged Gisco.

The Mercenaries, to prevent the captive Elders from escaping, had broken their legs with a metal bar, then had thrown

them all promiscuously to rot in a ditch of filth. The most robust, when they heard the rattle of the platters, would raise themselves up shrieking; and it was thus that Gisco had seen Salammbô. He had guessed that she was a Carthaginian woman by the little beads of *sandastrum* that clattered on her buskins, and actuated by the presentment of some important mystery, with the aid of his companions he had succeeded in getting out of the pit and dragging himself on his hands and elbows twenty yards or more to Mâtho's tent, where he had heard everything.

"It is you!" she said at last, almost appalled.

Lifting himself up on his hands, he replied: "It is I! All believe me to be dead, is it not so?"

She bowed her head, and he continued: "Ah! why have not the Baals granted me this mercy!"—and he drew so close that he touched her robe—"they would have spared me the pain of cursing you!"

Salammbô recoiled quickly back; so afraid was she of this unclean being, who seemed as hideous as a larva and as terrible as a phantom.

"I shall soon be one hundred years old," he said. "I have seen Agathocles, I have also seen Regulus and the Roman eagles pass over the Punic harvest fields! I have seen all the horrors of battles and the sea encumbered with the wrecks of our fleets! The Barbarians whom I once commanded have captured and chained me by my four limbs like a murderous slave; my companions are dying about me; the odours of their corpses awaken me at night; I drive away the birds that swoop down to peck out their eyes; and yet not for one single day have I despaired of Carthage! Though I have seen the armies of the world pitted against her and the flames of the siege overtop the temples, I should still have believed in her eternity! But now all is ended! All is lost! The gods curse her! Malediction on you who have hastened her ruin by your dishonour!"

She opened her lips.

"Ah! I was there!" cried he. "I heard you panting with lust like a prostitute, and when he told you of his passion, you permitted him to kiss your hands! But if the madness of your

unchastity impelled you, at least you should have done as the wild beasts, which hide themselves to couple, and not thus have displayed your shame almost before the very eyes of your father!"

"What?" she exclaimed.

"Ah! Don't you know that the two entrenchments are within sixty cubits of each other—that your Mâtho, from excess of audacious pride, has established himself directly in front of Hamilcar? Your father is just there behind you, and if I could only have climbed up the pathway leading to the platform I could have cried, 'Come now, see your daughter in the arms of the Barbarian! She has put on the vestments of the goddess for his pleasure, and abandons her body to him; thus she betrays the honour of your name and the majesty of the gods, the vengeance of her country, the very salvation of Carthage!'"

The movements of his toothless mouth made his long white beard move violently; his eyes were fastened upon her and seemed to devour her, as he said: "Oh! Sacrilegious one! Be accursed! Accursed! Accursed!"

Salammbô had drawn back the tent cloth, and held it up-lifted without answering Gisco. She looked in the direction of Hamilcar's encampment.

"It is in that direction, is it not?" she asked.

"What matters that to you? Back! Away! Better to crush your face against the earth! It is a holy place, which your look would pollute!"

She threw the Zaïmph around her waist, gathered up her veils, mantle, and scarf—"I go!" she ejaculated, and disappeared.

At first she moved through the darkness without meeting anyone, as all had hastened toward the fire, and the uproar increased as the far-reaching flames of the conflagration impurpled the sky behind. Presently a long terrace stopped her progress. She turned from right to left at hazard, searching for a rope, a ladder, a stone, anything, in fact, to enable her to mount over the wall. She was afraid of Gisco, and it seemed to her that she was being pursued by cries and steps. Day was beginning to

dawn. By the feeble light, she perceived a narrow path leading through the entrenchments; taking the hem of her robe between her teeth, she reached the platform in three bounds.

A loud shout sounded below her in the shade, the same signal that she had heard at the foot of the stairway of the galleys. Leaning over the terrace, she recognised the man sent by the priest Schahabarim, holding the two saddled horses.

All night he had wandered between the two entrenchments, but becoming disquieted by the conflagration, he had gone back, trying to discover what was happening in Mâtho's camp; and as he knew that this place was nearest to his tent, in obedience to the priest's orders he had not left the spot, but there awaited Salammbô.

He mounted and stood upright on the back of one of the horses, and Salammbô slipped down to him from the terrace; they spurred their horses into a sharp gallop, circling the Punic camp in search of an entrance.

Mâtho reëntered his tent. The smoking lamp was almost out, and he thought that Salammbô must be sleeping. So he lightly touched the lion's skin, on the palm bed. He called, and she answered not; he quickly tore down a strip of canvas to admit the daylight. The Zäimph had disappeared.

The earth trembled beneath multitudinous steps. Yells, neighs, and the clash of armour rose upon the air, and the fanfare of the clarions rang out the signal for a charge. All was like a fierce hurricane whirling around him. An inordinate fury seized him; he grasped his weapons and madly dashed into the open.

Long files of Barbarians were descending the mountain sides at a run, and the Punic squares were advancing against them with a heavy, regular oscillation. The fog, rifted by the sun's rays, formed little detached clouds that hung in the air, and gradually lifting, disclosed standards, helmets, and the points of pikes. Under the rapid evolutions, portions of the field still in shadow seemed to change place as a single piece. Elsewhere

it appeared as if torrents were crossing each other, and between them thorny masses stood motionless. Mâtho distinguished the captains, soldiers, heralds, and even the varlets in the rear who were mounted on asses. But Narr' Havas, instead of holding his position and covering the foot-soldiers, abruptly wheeled to the right, as if he deliberately wished to be crushed by Hamilcar.

His cavalry outsped the elephants, which were slackening speed; and the horses all stretched out their heads, uncurbed by reins, galloping at a pace so furious that their bellies fairly seemed to graze the earth. Then suddenly Narr' Havas rode resolutely toward a sentinel, threw down his sword, his lance, his javelins, and disappeared, unarmed, in the midst of the Carthaginians.

The king of the Numidians entered Hamilcar's tent and said to him, pointing out his men, who had halted at a distance: "Barca! I bring them to you—they are yours!"

Then he prostrated himself in sign of obedience; and recalled, as proof of his fidelity to Hamilcar, all his conduct since the beginning of the war.

First he recounted how he had prevented the siege of Carthage and the massacre of the Punic captives; then, how he had refrained from profiting by the victory over Hanno after the defeat at Utica. As to the Tyrian cities, they were on the frontier of his own realm. Finally, he had not participated at the battle of Macar, had even purposely absented himself, to avoid the obligation of combating the Suffete.

As a matter of fact, Narr' Havas had always desired to aggrandise himself by encroachments on the Punic provinces, and, according to the chances of victory, he had succoured or deserted the Mercenaries. But seeing that Hamilcar would ultimately be the stronger, he had determined to ally himself to him; and perhaps there might also be in his present defection a grudge against Mâtho, either because he was in command, or by reason of his former love.

Without interruption the Suffete listened. This man who presented himself thus with all his forces in an army to which he owed a debt of vengeance, was an auxiliary not to be de-

spised. Hamilcar divined at once the utility of such an alliance for the advancement of his great projects. With the Numidians he would at once free himself from the Libyans; then he could draw with him the West to the conquest of Iberia; hence, without asking why he had not come sooner, or commenting on any of his falsehoods, Hamilcar kissed Narr' Havas, clasping him thrice to his breast.

In a desperate attempt to get rid of them, Hamilcar had fired the Libyans' camp. This army came to him like help from the gods; but dissimulating his joy the Suffete craftily replied:

"May the Baals favour you! I do not know what the Republic will do for you, but know this, that Hamilcar is not ungrateful."

The tumult redoubled; captains entered; he armed himself as he spoke: "Let us go! Return! Your cavalry will destroy their infantry between your elephants and mine! Courage! Exterminate them!"

And Narr' Havas was rushing forth, when Salammbô appeared. She leaped quickly from her horse, threw open her wide mantle, and, spreading out her arms, she displayed the Zaïmph.

The leathern curtain of the tent, looped up at the four corners, made visible the entire circuit of the mountains covered with soldiers, and as it stood in the centre, Salammbô could be seen from all sides. An immense clamour burst forth, a long cry of triumph and of hope. Those who were marching stopped; the dying leaned on their elbows, and turned round to bless her.

All the Barbarians now knew that she had recovered the Zaïmph; from the distance they saw her, or believed that they saw her, and their yells of rage and vengeance resounded, despite the applause of the Carthaginians. Thus these five armies in tiers upon the mountains stamped and howled with joy or rage on all sides of Salammbô.

Hamilcar, powerless to speak, thanked her by nodding his head. His eyes alternately scanned her and the Zaïmph; and he noticed that her chainlet was broken. Then he quivered, seized

by a terrible suspicion. But quickly resuming his impassibility, he looked at Narr' Havas askance without turning his face.

The king of the Numidians held himself apart in a discreet attitude; on his forehead was a little dust where he had touched the ground when prostrating himself. Finally the Suffete advanced toward him, and, with an air full of gravity: "In recognition of the services that you have rendered me, Narr' Havas, I give you my daughter!" adding, "Be my son, and protect your father!"

Narr' Havas made a gesture of great surprise, then throwing himself on Hamilcar's hands, he covered them with kisses.

Salammbô, calm as a statue, seemed not to comprehend: she blushed slightly and cast down her eyes, and her long lashes made shadows upon her cheeks. Hamilcar desired to unite them immediately in an indissoluble betrothal. In Salammbô's hands a lance was placed, which she offered to Narr' Havas; their thumbs were tied together with a thong of leather; then corn was poured over their heads, and the grains which fell around them rang like rebounding hail.



XII: THE

AQUEDUCT



TWELVE hours later there remained of the Mercenaries only heaps of wounded, dying, and dead.

Hamilcar had suddenly come forth from the bottom of the gorge, and descended again upon the western slope looking towards Hippo-Zarytus, whither, as the space broadened out, he had managed to entice the Barbarians. Narr' Havas with his cavalry encompassed them; the Suffete meanwhile drove them back, and crushed them. Furthermore, they were conquered in advance by the loss of the Zaïmph; even those who had no real faith in it felt a distress akin to weakness. Hamilcar, not gratifying his pride by remaining in possession of the battlefield, had drawn off a little to the left upon the heights, whence he commanded the enemy.

The outline of the camps could be recognised by the leaning palisades. A long mass of black cinders smoked on the site of the Libyans' camp; the upturned ground undulated like the waves of the sea, and the tents, with their flapping canvas, resembled rudderless ships, half lost among the breakers. Cuirasses, pitchforks, clarions, fragments of wood, iron and brass, grain, straw, were mingled with the corpses. Here and there some stray fire-lance on the point of extinction was burning

against a pile of baggage. The earth in some places was hidden beneath shields; carcasses of horses succeeded one another in heaps, like a chain of hillocks. Large sandals, arms, coats of mail and heads in their helmets, kept together by the chin-pieces, which rolled about like balls, were everywhere visible. Human hair hung on the thorn-bushes. In pools of blood disembowelled elephants lay struggling in death-agonies, with their towers yet upon their backs. One walked over upon glutinous things; and though no rain had fallen, there were pools of mud.

This confusion of corpses covered the entire surface of the mountain from top to bottom.

Those who were still alive stirred no more than the dead, but crouched in irregular groups, gazing at one another, too much terrified to speak.

At the end of a long meadow, the lake of Hippo-Zarytus shone under the rays of the setting sun; to the right, close-packed groups of white houses stood out above a girdle of walls; the sea beyond spread out indefinitely; and chin in hand, the Barbarians sighed as they thought of their native lands. A cloud of grey dust settled down. The evening wind blew, refreshing and filling their lungs. As it grew colder, the vermin could be seen leaving the dead bodies, which were growing cold, and crawling along on the warm sand; and ravens perched motionless on the top of large stones, looking toward the dying.

When night fell, dogs with yellow hair, the unclean beasts which follow armies, came stealing softly amidst the Barbarians. At first they licked the clotted blood from the yet warm stumps of limbs, but soon they set to devour the corpses, always beginning with the bowels.

One by one, like shadows, the fugitives reappeared; the women also ventured to return, for there were still some of them left, especially with the Libyans, despite the frightful massacre of them by the Numidians.

Some lighted rope-ends to serve as torches; others held their pikes crossed, upon which they placed their dead and carried them a short distance away.

The dead were stretched out on their backs in long rows, open-mouthed, with their lances hard by, or else they were piled up in confusion; and often, in the endeavour to discover the missing, it became necessary to dig through quite a heap. Then the torches were moved slowly over their faces: the hideous weapons had inflicted complicated wounds; greenish shreds of flesh hung from their foreheads; they were cut in pieces, or clove into the marrow, bluish from strangulation, or deeply gashed by the elephants' tusks.

Even though they had expired almost at the same time, there were marked differences in the progress of decomposition. Men from the north were bloated with livid swellings; while the Africans, who were more wiry, seemed to have been smoked, and were already drying up.

The Mercenaries were recognisable by the tattooings on their hands: the veterans of Antiochus displayed a sparrowhawk; those who had served in Egypt, the head of a cynocephalus; those who had served under the princes of Asia, a battle-axe, a pomegranate, or a hammer; and those who had served in the Greek Republics, the outline of a citadel or the name of an Archon; and there were some whose arms were entirely covered by numerous symbols, blending with the scars of old and new wounds.

For the bodies of the men of Latin race—namely, the Samnites, Etruscans, Campanians, and the Bruttians—four large funeral pyres were erected.

The Greeks dug pits for their dead with the points of their swords; the Spartans took off their red cloaks to wrap about their fallen comrades; the Athenians turned the bodies so as to face the rising sun; the Cantabrians buried their slain under heaps of pebbles; the Nasamones doubled the corpses in two, lashing them together with leathern thongs; and the Garamanians went away to bury upon the shore, that the waves might perpetually lave them. But the Latins were in despair, because they could not collect the ashes in urns; the Nomads regretted the hot sands in which bodies were mummified; and the Celts

missed the three rough stones under a rainy sky at the end of a gulf full of islets.

Loud cries were raised, followed by a long silence. This was to compel the departed souls to return. Then the clamour was perseveringly resumed at regular intervals.

They excused themselves to the dead for being unable to accord them honours, as the rites prescribed; for owing to this privation they were doomed to wander during infinite periods through all manner of perils and metamorphoses. They questioned them, asking what they desired, while others poured abuse on them for allowing themselves to be conquered.

The light from the great funeral pyres cast a weird pallor over the bloodless faces, upturned here and there upon fragments of armour; tears induced tears, till sobs became more poignant, recognitions and embraces more frantic. The women threw themselves upon the bodies, mouth to mouth and brow against brow; they were only forced away with blows when the earth was thrown into the pits over the bodies. They blackened their cheeks; cut their hair; drew their blood and shed it in the graves. They even gashed upon themselves wounds similar to those disfiguring their dead husbands and lovers. Groans burst through the clashing uproar of the cymbals. Some pulled off their amulets and spat upon them. The dying rolled in the bloody mire, furiously biting their mutilated fists; and forty-three Samnites, a devoted band, all in the sacred springtime of their youth, cut each other's throats like gladiators. Presently the wood for the funeral pyres failed; the flames died down; all the ditches were filled; and, wearied with weeping, enfeebled, tottering, they slept beside their dead brethren, some clinging tenaciously to a life full of troubles, and others hoping that they might never again waken.

In the grey of the dawn there appeared, beyond the lines of the Barbarians, soldiers filing past with their helmets uplifted on the points of spears: saluting the Mercenaries, they inquired if they had no message to send back to their native lands.

Others advanced, and the Barbarians recognised many of their old comrades.

The Suffete had proposed to all of the captives to serve in his troops. Many had fearlessly refused; and as he was determined not to feed them, or hand them over to the Grand Council, he had dismissed them with a warning not to again fight against Carthage. He had distributed the enemies' weapons to those whom fear of torture had rendered tractable, and now they presented themselves to the vanquished, less to win them over than from an impulse of pride and curiosity.

They began with a recital of the good treatment bestowed upon them by the Suffete. Much as the Barbarians despised these traitors, they listened to them with envy. Then, at the first words of reproach, the cowards got angry, displaying from afar their own captured swords and cuirasses, daring them with insults to come and take them. The Barbarians picked up stones: all fled; and nothing more could be seen at the top of the mountain than their spear-points projecting above the palisades.

Then a grief heavier than that caused by the humiliation of defeat overwhelmed the Barbarians; they reflected upon the futility of their courage, and they remained with their eyes fixed, grinding their teeth.

The same idea took possession of all: they rushed in a tumultuous crowd upon the Carthaginian prisoners whom by chance the soldiers of the Suffete had failed to find; and as he had withdrawn from the battlefield, they were still secure in the deep pit. These victims were now ranged on a flat stretch of ground, while sentinels made a circle around them, and the women were permitted to enter the enclosure by thirties and forties successively. Eager to make the most of the short time permitted to each group, they ran from one victim to another, uncertain, palpitating; then leaning over the poor wretches, they pounded them with all their might, like washerwomen beating linen; crying aloud their husbands' names, they tore them with their nails and dug out their eyes with their hairpins.

After this the men tortured them: from their feet, which they cut off at the ankles, to their foreheads, from which they

tore crowns of skin to place upon their own heads. The Eaters-of-Unclean-Things were atrocious in their devices: they inflamed the wounds by pouring into them dust, vinegar, and bits of pottery; others were waiting behind them; the blood flowed, and they made merry as do the vintagers around the fuming vats.

All this time Mâtho was seated on the ground in the same place as when the battle ended. His elbows on his knees, and his temples pressed between his hands, he saw nothing, heard nothing, and thought no more.

At the shouts of joy uttered by the crowd, he raised his head. Before him, upon a pole, hung a strip of canvas trailing on the ground, partially screening disordered baskets, rugs, and a lion's skin. He recognised his tent; and he riveted his eyes upon the ground, as if on that spot the daughter of Hamilcar, in vanishing from him, had been engulfed in the earth.

The tattered canvas flapped in the wind; sometimes the long strips fluttered across his face, whereon he could see a red mark like the print of a hand—the imprint of the hand of Narr' Havas, the token of their alliance. Then Mâtho arose; he seized a yet smoking brand, and threw it contemptuously upon the wreck of his tent. Then with the toe of his cothurn he kicked into the flames the things which were scattered about, so that all should be consumed.

Suddenly, without anyone knowing whence he sprang, Spendius appeared. The former slave had bound two splints of a broken lance-butt upon his thighs, and he limped about in a piteous way, giving vent to dolorous moans.

"Take that off," said Mâtho to him. "I know that you are brave!" He was so crushed by the injustice of the gods that he had not sufficient energy to be indignant with mortals.

Spendius, beckoning, led him to the hollow of a peak, where Zarxas and Autharitus were in concealment.

They had taken flight like the slave—the one, cruel as he was, and the other despite his valour. But who, said they, could have expected the treason of Narr' Havas, or the burning of the Libyans' camp, or the loss of the Zaïmph, or the sudden at-

tack of Hamilcar, and above all, his manœuvres, compelling them to return to the heart of the mountain, under the direct fire of the Carthaginians? Spendius would not admit his fright, and persisted in the assertion that his leg was broken.

Finally the three chiefs and the *Schalischim* consulted as to what course would be best in their present strait.

Hamilcar had closed their road to Carthage; they were trapped between his soldiers and the provinces of Narr' Havas. The Tyrian towns would join the conquerors; they would be driven to the seacoast, and the united forces would crush them. This was their inevitable fate.

No means suggested themselves for avoiding the war, hence they must pursue it to the uttermost. But how could all these discouraged men, still bleeding from their wounds, be convinced of the necessity of endless battle?

"I will take care of that," said Spendius.

Two hours later a man who came from the direction of Hippo-Zarytus climbed the mountain at a run. He waved tablets at arm's length, and as he shouted loudly the Barbarians surrounded him.

He bore despatches from the Greek soldiers of Sardinia, advising their comrades in Africa to keep a close watch over Gisco and the other captives. A merchant of Samos, a certain Hipponax, coming from Carthage, had apprised them that a plot was being organised for their rescue, and the Barbarians were notified to provide against the emergency, as the Republic was powerful.

Spendius' strategy did not at first succeed as he had anticipated. This assurance of a new peril, far from exciting fury, raised fears. They remembered Hamilcar's warning, thrown but lately in their midst; they now expected something unforeseen and terrible. The night was passed in great anxiety; many even removed their arms, to mollify the Suffete whenever he might present himself.

But on the morrow, at the third watch of the day, a second courier appeared, still more breathless and begrimed with dust than the first. Spendius jerked from his hands a papyrus scroll

covered with Phœnician characters, wherein the Mercenaries were supplicated not to be discouraged, for the braves of Tunis were coming with large reënforcements.

Spendius read this letter three times successively; and sustained by two Cappadocians, who held him sitting upon their shoulders, he was carried from place to place, reading it. For seven consecutive hours he continued his harangue.

He reminded the Mercenaries of the promises made by the Grand Council; the Africans of the cruelties of the intendants; and all the Barbarians of the general injustice of Carthage. The Suffete's gentleness was a trap to capture them. Those who surrendered would be sold as slaves; the vanquished would perish in tortures. As for flight, what road was open? No nation would receive them. Whereas, if they persisted in their efforts, they would obtain at once their liberty, revenge, and money! And they would not have to wait long, since all the people of Tunis and of Libya were hurrying to their assistance.

He displayed the unrolled papyrus, saying, "Look upon this! Read! Here is what they promise! I do not lie!"

Dogs prowled about, their black muzzles plastered with red. The high sun heated the bare heads of the men. A nauseous odour rose from the imperfectly buried dead; some of the corpses protruded from the ground as far as the waists. Spendius called on them to bear witness to the truth of what he said; then menacingly he raised his fists in the direction of Hamilcar.

Mâtho was watching him, and, in order to cover his cowardice, Spendius made a display of anger, by which he was himself gradually impressed: he dedicated himself to the gods, while he heaped curses upon Carthage. "The torture of captives was mere child's-play. Why, therefore, spare them, only to drag after the army useless cattle? No! we must make an end of them! their projects are known. One alone could betray us! No quarter! The worthy men will be recognised by the fleetness of their legs, and the strength of their blows."

Then they returned to the captives, many of whom were still in death-throes; they finished them by thrusting their feet into

the victims' mouths, or stabbing them with javelins. Finally they thought of Gisco; no one had seen him anywhere; this caused them anxiety. All wanted to be sure of his death, and to participate in its consummation. At last three Samnite herdsmen discovered him twelve paces from the site where Mâtho's tent had recently stood; they recognised him by his long beard, and called the others.

Lying down on his back, his arms against his hips, and his knees pressed together, he had the appearance of one dead, laid out for the tomb. However, his thin sides rose and fell, and his eyes opened widely, contrasting with the pallor of his face, as he glared with a fixed, intolerable stare.

At first the Barbarians looked at him with great astonishment. During the time that he had been in the pit almost everyone had forgotten him; disturbed by old memories, they now stood at a distance, not daring to lift a hand against him.

But those who were behind, murmured and thrust themselves forward; a Garamantian passed through the crowd, brandishing a sickle; all understood his intent; their faces grew crimson, and seized with shame, they yelled, "Yes! yes!"

The man with the curved steel went up to Gisco, took him by the head, and placing it on his knee, he reaped it with a few rapid strokes; it fell, and two great gushing jets of blood made a hole in the dust. Zarxas sprung upon it, and, more agile than a leopard, he ran toward the Carthaginians.

Then, when he was two thirds up the mountain, he pulled Gisco's head from his breast, and holding it by the beard, swung his arm rapidly several times, and the head finally launched forth, describing a long parabola, and disappeared behind the Punic entrenchments.

Soon on the edge of the palisades were erected two standards intercrossed, an understood sign for reclaiming the dead. Then four heralds, chosen because of their deep voices, came forward with large clarions, and through the brass trumpets they declared that henceforth there could be nothing between the Carthaginians and the Barbarians, neither faith, nor pity, nor gods; that they refused in advance all overtures, and that

messengers of truce would be returned with their hands cut off.

Immediately afterward, Spendius was sent to Hippo-Zarytus, in order to arrange for provisions. The Tyrian city sent them supplies the same evening. They ate greedily; and when thus comforted, they quickly packed up the remnants of their baggage and their broken weapons, placing the women in the centre, and, without heeding the wounded wailing behind them, they set out by the river-bank at a quick march, like a pack of departing wolves.

They were marching upon Hippo-Zarytus, determined to take it, for they were greatly in need of a town.

Hamilcar, watching the Barbarians from afar off, was filled with despair, despite the pride he felt at seeing them fly before him. He should have been able to attack them at once with fresh troops. One more such day, and the war would have been ended! If matters dragged, the enemy would return, in greater strength, as the Tyrian towns would doubtless join them. His clemency to the vanquished had served no purpose; henceforth he would be merciless.

The same evening he sent to the Grand Council a dromedary laden with bracelets taken from the dead; and, with horrible threats, he ordered them to despatch another army to him.

For a long time all had believed him to be lost, so that when they learned of his victory, they experienced a stupefaction that amounted almost to terror. The vaguely announced return of the Zaïmph completed the miracle. Thus the gods and the power of Carthage seemed now to belong to Hamilcar.

Not one amongst his enemies dared venture a complaint or a recrimination. By the enthusiasm of his friends, and the pusillanimity of his enemies, an army of five thousand men was ready before the prescribed time.

This reënforcement promptly made for Utica to support the Suffete in the rear, while three thousand of the most important citizens embarked on vessels which were to land at Hippo-Zarytus, whence they purposed to drive back the Barbarians.

Hanno had accepted the command, but he confided the army to his lieutenant, Magdassan, in order to conduct the naval forces himself, as, in consequence of his malady, he could no longer endure the jolting of his litter. His disease had eaten away his lips and nostrils, and made a large hole in his face, so that the back of his throat was visible at ten paces. Knowing that he was hideous, he covered his head with a veil, like a woman.

Hippo-Zarytus heeded not his summons, nor those of the Barbarians; but each morning the inhabitants let down to the latter baskets filled with provisions, and calling from the height of the towers, excused themselves on account of the demands of the Republic, and implored them to withdraw. By signals they addressed the same protestations to the Carthaginians stationed on the sea.

Hanno contented himself with blockading the port, without risking an attack. Meantime, he persuaded the judges of Hippo-Zarytus to take three hundred soldiers into the city. Afterward, he sailed toward the cape of Grapes, making a long détour in order to encompass the Barbarians—an inopportune and even dangerous proceeding. His jealousy prevented him from aiding Hamilcar: he arrested the Suffete's spies, interfered in all his plans, and imperilled his enterprise. At length Hamilcar wrote to the Grand Council to deprive Hanno of his command, and the latter was therefore recalled to Carthage, furious at the baseness of the Elders and the folly of his colleague. Then, after so much hope, they found themselves in a situation even more deplorable; but they all tried not to reflect or even speak on the topic.

As if they had not enough misfortunes, they learned that the Mercenaries of Sardinia had crucified their general, seized the fortified towns, and everywhere had slain the men of Canaanite race. The Romans threatened the Republic with immediate hostilities unless she gave them twelve hundred talents, with the entire island of Sardinia. Rome had accepted an alliance with the Barbarians, and had sent to them flat boats freighted with flour and dried meats. The Carthaginians pursued these, and

captured five hundred men; but, three days later, a fleet coming from the country of Byzacium, carrying provisions to Carthage, foundered in a storm. It was plain that the gods were against Carthage.

Then the citizens of Hippo-Zarytus, pretending an alarm, made Hanno's three hundred men mount on the walls; then coming behind them they seized them by the legs, and suddenly hurled them over the ramparts. Those who were not instantly killed were pursued, and drowned themselves in the sea.

Utica also was suffering from the presence of soldiers, for Magdassan had acted like Hanno, and according to his orders he surrounded the city, deaf to Hamilcar's prayers. His soldiers were given wine mixed with mandrake, and during their sleep they were slaughtered. At the same time the Barbarians arrived, and Magdassan took flight. The gates were opened, and from this moment the two Tyrian towns showed a persistent devotion for their new friends, and an inveterate hatred for their former allies.

This abandonment of the Punic cause was a warning and an example. Hopes of future deliverance were rekindled. Populations heretofore uncertain hesitated no longer. All gave way. The Suffete learned it, and expected no assistance. He was now irrevocably lost.

He dismissed Narr' Havas at once, for he had to defend, henceforth, the boundaries of his own kingdom. For his own part he resolved to return to Carthage and obtain soldiers to resume the war.

The Barbarians established at Hippo-Zarytus perceived his army as it descended the mountain.

Whither were the Carthaginians going? Doubtless hunger urged them; and maddened by their sufferings, despite their weakness, they were coming to offer battle. But they turned to the right: then it must be that they were retreating. They might be followed and utterly crushed. The Barbarians dashed in pursuit.

The Carthaginians were held back by the stream; it was now

broad, and the west wind had not been blowing. Some swam across, others floated on their shields, and they resumed their march. Night fell. They were no longer visible.

The Barbarians did not pause, but ascended the stream, searching for a shallow place to ford. The people of Tunis hastened to help, bringing those of Utica with them. At every clump of bushes their number increased, and the Carthaginians, lying on the ground, could hear the tramp of feet in the darkness. From time to time, in order to make their pursuers slacken their pace, Barca fired back upon them a volley of arrows, thereby killing many. When day broke they were in the mountains of Ariana, at the point where the road makes a bend.

Then Mâtho, marching at the head of his troops, believed that he distinguished in the horizon something green on the summit of an eminence. The earth sloped; obelisks, domes, and houses appeared! It was Carthage! His heart beat so furiously that he leaned against a tree to keep from falling.

He thought of all that had occurred in his existence since the last time that he had passed this way! It was an infinite surprise, an amazement. Then joy possessed him at the idea that he should again see Salammbô. His past reasons for execrating her flooded his memory, but he peremptorily rejected them. Quivering in every fibre, and with straining eyes, he gazed beyond Eschmoûn at the high terrace of a palace above the palms. An ecstatic smile illumined his face, as if some great radiant light had fallen over him; he opened his arms, and sent kisses on the breeze, murmuring, "Come! Come!" A sigh swelled his bosom, and two tears, elongated like pearls, fell upon his beard.

"What is delaying you?" cried Spendius. "Hasten! March on! The Suffete will escape us! Why, your knees shake, and you are looking at me like a drunken man!"

Stamping his feet with impatience, he urged Mâtho to advance, and blinking his eyes, as at the approach to an end seen far away, he cried: "Ah! we are there! We are there! We have got them!"

He had such a convincing, triumphant air, that Mâtho, wak-

ened out of his torpor, felt himself drawn on. These words, coming unexpectedly in the crisis of his distress, drove his despair to vengeance and made an opening for his wrath. He mounted one of the camels in the baggage train, tore off the halter, and with the long cord struck with his full force the laggards, running alternately from right to left in the rear of the troops, like a dog driving a flock.

At his voice of thunder the men closed up the lines, and those on crutches hastened their steps: half-way across the isthmus the interval lessened. The vanguard of the Barbarians marched in the dust of the Carthaginians. The two armies drew nearer and nearer, until they almost touched. But the gates of Malqua and Tagaste, and the great gate of Khamoûn, threw open their ponderous valves. The Punic squares divided; three columns were swallowed up and eddied under the porches. Soon the masses closed in too much upon themselves, and were choked in the entrances, so that they could not move. Spears struck against spears in the air, and the Barbarians' arrows splintered against the walls.

Hamilcar appeared on the threshold of Khamoûn; he turned, and ordered his men to scatter; then he dismounted, and with his sword pricked his horse on the crupper, letting him loose upon the Barbarians. It was an Orynx stallion, nourished on balls of meal, and would bend his knees to permit his master to mount him. Why, then, did he send it away? Was this a sacrifice?

The noble horse galloped amidst the lances, knocking down men; entangling his feet in his halter, he fell, then struggled up on his feet with furious bounds; and while they scattered, endeavored to arrest him, or looked at him in surprise, the Carthaginians reunited and entered the enormous gate, that resoundingly closed behind them.

It did not yield; the Barbarians plunged and battered against it; and for some minutes there was a movement throughout the entire army that became weaker and weaker, until it at last subsided.

The Carthaginians, having stationed soldiers on the aqueduct,

began hurling stones, balls, and beams. Spendius argued that obstinacy was useless; so they pitched their encampment at a greater distance from the walls, fully resolved to besiege Carthage.

Meantime the rumour of the war had spread beyond the borders of the Punic dominions; and from the Pillars of Hercules, to beyond Cyrene, herdsmen guarding their herds thought of it, and caravans discussed it at night beneath the stars. This noble Carthage, Mistress of the Sea, wonderful as the sun, awful as a god, had found men who dared to attack her! Even her downfall had frequently been reported, and all had believed it, as all were longing for it—the subject peoples, tributary villages, allied provinces, and independent tribes: those who cursed her for her tyranny, or who were jealous of her power, or who coveted her wealth.

The bravest had promptly joined themselves to the Mercenaries. The defeat at the Macar, however, had discouraged all others. Finally they regained confidence, and gradually making advances, had come nearer; and now the inhabitants of the eastern regions, the sand-hills of Clypea, were located on the other side of the gulf. As soon as the Barbarians appeared, they showed themselves.

These were not the Libyans from the vicinity of Carthage, who had for a long time constituted the third army, but the Nomads from the plateau of Barca, bandits from Cape Phiscus and the promontory of Derne, and others from Phazania and Marmarica. They had crossed the desert, sustaining themselves by drinking from the brackish wells built of camels' bones: the Zuæces, covered with ostrich plumes, had come in their quadrigæ; the Garamantes, masked with black veils, rode in the rear on their painted mares; others mounted on asses, on onagers, on zebras, or on buffaloes; and some dragged the roofs of their cabins, shaped like a shallop, with their families and idols.

There were Ammonians, with limbs wrinkled by the hot water of the fountains; Atarantes, who curse the sun; Troglo-

dytes, who laughingly inter their dead under branches of trees; and the hideous Auseans, who eat locusts; the Achrymachidas, who eat lice; and the Gysantes, painted over with vermilion, who eat monkeys.

All were ranged along the seacoast in a great, straight line. They advanced in succession, like eddies of sand raised by the wind. In the centre of the isthmus the throng halted; the Mercenaries established in front of them near the walls did not wish to move.

Then from the direction of Ariana came the men of the west, the people of Numidia—for, in fact, Narr' Havas only governed the Massylians; and furthermore, as custom permitted them, after a reverse, to abandon their king, they had assembled on the Zainus, and at the first movement Hamilcar had made, they crossed it. First came running all the hunters of the Malethut-Baal and of the Garaphos, dressed in lions' skins, and driving with the shafts of their pikes little, thin horses with long manes; after these came the Gætulians, encased in breast-plates of serpents' skins; then the Pharusians, wearing tall crowns made of wax and resin; following these were the Caunians, Macares, and Tillabares, each holding two javelins and a round shield of hippopotamus-hide. They halted at the foot of the Catacombs, near the first pools of the great Lagoon.

But when the Libyans had moved away, on the ground that they had occupied there appeared, like a cloud, lying level with the earth, a multitude of Negroes: they had come from White-Harousch and Black-Harousch, from the desert of Augîla, and even from the vast country of Agazymba, four months' journey to the south of the Garamantes, and regions even more distant. In spite of their redwood ornaments, the filth on their black skins made them look like mulberries that had rolled a long time in the dust.

They wore breeches made from fibres of bark, tunics of dried grass, and on their heads the muzzles of wild animals: they howled like wolves, as they shook triangles ornamented with dangling rings, and brandished cow-tails on the end of sticks as banners.

Behind the Numidians, the Maurusians, and the Gætulians, crowded the yellow men who were scattered over the country beyond Taggir in the cedar forests. Cat-skin quivers flapped over their shoulders, and they led on leashes enormous dogs as tall as asses, which never barked.

And then, as if Africa had not sufficiently emptied itself, and in order to collect together more furies, they had even recruited the lowest races: in the rear of all the others they could be seen; men with bestial profiles, grinning in an idiotic manner, wretches ravaged by hideous diseases, deformed pigmies, mulattoes of doubtful sex, Albinos blinking their pink eyes in the sunlight—all stammering unintelligible sounds, and putting fingers in their mouths to signify hunger. The medley of weapons was not less remarkable than the people, or their apparel. Not a deadly invention was absent, from wooden poniards, stone battle-axes, ivory tridents, to long sabres toothed like saws, slender, and made of a pliable sheet of copper. They wielded cutlasses divided in many branches, like antelopes' horns; they carried bill-hooks attached to cords, iron triangles, clubs, and stilettoes.

The Ethiopians of Bambotus secreted in their hair tiny poison darts. Many had brought stones in sacks; others, who were empty-handed, gnashed their teeth.

Continually this multitude surged back and forth. Dromedaries, daubed with tar like the hulls of ships, knocked over women who were carrying children on their hips. Provisions were spilling out of their baskets; and in walking one stepped on morsels of rock salt, packages of gum, rotten dates, and gourou-nuts. Sometimes on a vermin-covered bosom there appeared, suspended from a fine cord, a diamond, a fabulous gem worth an entire empire, for which satraps had sought. The majority of these people did not even know what they desired: a fascination, a curiosity urged them on; the Nomads, who had never seen a town, were frightened by the shadows cast by the massive walls.

The isthmus was hidden by this multitude of men, and the long stretch of tents, resembling huts during an inundation,



AN ENTIRE RIVER FELL FROM THE SKY

spread out to the first lines of the other Barbarians, who were streaming with steel, and symmetrically posted on the two flanks of the aqueduct.

The Carthaginians were still in terror of those who had already arrived, when they saw, making straight for Carthage, huge monsters, like buildings, with their masts, arms, cordage, joints, tops, and carapaces—the siege engines sent by the Tyrian cities: sixty *carrobalistas*, eighty onagers, thirty scorpions, fifty *tollenones*, twelve rams, and three gigantic catapults, able to throw rocks weighing fifteen talents. Masses of men clutched at their base, pushed and pulled to propel the engines, that quivered and shook at each step: in time the throng arrived in front of the walls.

But a few days would still be required to complete the preparations for the siege. The Mercenaries, forewarned by their previous defeats, did not wish to risk themselves in fruitless engagements; and on neither side was there any hurry, as all knew that a terrible conflict was about to ensue, which would result either in absolute victory or complete extermination.

Carthage would hold out for a long time; her broad walls offered a series of salient and reëntering angles—an arrangement full of advantages for repelling assaults.

However, on the side of the Catacombs a portion of the wall had crumbled; and during dark nights, between the disjointed blocks could be seen lights in the dens of Malqua. In certain places these overlooked the top of the ramparts, and here lived many who had taken for new wives the women of the Mercenaries driven by Mâtho out of the camp. When the women saw their own men, their hearts melted, and from afar they waved long scarves; then they came in the darkness to chat with the soldiers through the rift in the walls, and the Grand Council were told one morning that they had all fled. Some had crawled between the stones; others, more daring, had descended by ropes.

Spendius finally resolved to accomplish his cherished project.

The war, by taking him far away, had so far kept him from its accomplishment; and since they had returned before Car-

thage, it seemed to him that the townsmen suspected his enterprise; but soon they diminished the sentinels on the aqueduct, as they did not possess too many guards for the defence of the walls. For many days the former slave practised aiming arrows at the flamingoes on the lake shore. Then one moonlight evening he entreated Mâtho to have a huge bonfire of straw lighted in the middle of the night, and order all his men simultaneously to utter shrieks. Thereupon, taking Zarxas, he went off by the edge of the gulf in the direction of Tunis.

When abreast of the last arches, they returned, going straight toward the aqueduct. As the road was exposed, they crept along to the base of the pillars. The sentinels on the platform marched calmly up and down.

High flames shot up; clarions were sounded. The soldiers in the watch-towers, believing that it was an assault, rushed toward Carthage.

One man remained. He stood like a black figure against the dome of the sky; the moonlight was behind him, and his disproportionate shadow fell on the plain, like a moving obelisk. They waited until he was exactly in front of them. Zarxas seized his sling, but Spendius stopped him, moved by prudence or ferocity, and whispered: "No! the whirring of the ball would make a noise! Leave it to me!" Then he bent his bow with all his might, supporting the end against his left instep, took aim, and the fatal arrow flew.

The man did not fall. He disappeared.

"If he were wounded we should hear him," said Spendius, and he sprang quickly up, story after story, as he had done the first time, by the aid of a harpoon and cord. When he reached the top, beside the corpse, he let down the cord. The Balearian fastened to it a pick and mallet, and returned.

The trumpets no longer sounded: all was now perfect quiet. Spendius had lifted one of the flagstones, entered the water, and replaced the stone over himself.

Estimating the distance by paces, he reached the exact spot where he had previously noticed a slanting fissure, and for three hours—in fact, till morning—he worked continuously and

furiously, breathing with great difficulty through the interstices of the upper stones; racked with violent pains, believing himself to be dying a score of times. At last a cracking was heard, an immense stone bounded on the lower arches and rolled down to the bottom—and all at once a cataract, an entire river, fell as from the sky into the plain! The aqueduct, cut in the centre, was emptying itself. This meant the death of Carthage and the victory of the Barbarians.

In an instant, the aroused Carthaginians appeared on the walls, the house-tops, and the temples. The Barbarians gave vent to joyous shouts, dancing around the vast waterfall in delirium, and in the enthusiasm of their delight wetted their heads in the rushing water.

At the summit of the aqueduct a man was perceived wearing a torn, brown tunic. Leaning over the edge, his hands upon his hips, he gazed beneath him, as if astonished at his own work.

Then he stood erect, scanning the horizon with a proud, haughty air, which seemed to say—"Behold! this is what I have accomplished!" Applause burst from the Barbarians. At last the Carthaginians comprehended the cause of their disaster, and howled in despair. Spendius ran from end to end of the platform, mad with pride, raising his arms, like the driver of a victorious chariot in the Olympian games.



XIII:

M O L O C H



THE Barbarians did not need to effect a circumvallation on the African side, as it was already theirs; but to make the approach to the walls less difficult they tore down the entrenchments bordering the moat. Mâtho then divided the army into large semi-circles, so as more effectually to beleaguer Carthage. The hoplites of the Mercenaries were stationed in the front rank; behind them, the slingers and horsemen; still further back were the baggage, the chariots, and the horses; and in front of this multitude, at three hundred paces from the towers, bristled the war-engines, known by an infinity of names that changed frequently in the course of ages; however, they could always be reduced to two systems—those which acted like slings, and the others which operated like bows.

The first, the catapults, consisted of a square frame with two vertical standards and a horizontal bar. At the back a cylinder furnished with cables held down a large beam carrying a ladle to receive the projectiles; the base of the beam was caught in a hank of twisted horse-hair; when the cords were loosened, the beam flew up, struck against the bar, which, checking it by a sudden shock, multiplied its force.

The second type presented a more complicated mechanism.

On a small pillar a cross-piece was attached by its centre, at which point ended a channel at right angles to it: at the ends of the cross-piece rose two frames, containing a twisted hank of hair: two small beams were fastened therein to hold the extremities of the cord, which was drawn to the bottom of the channel over a bronze tablet; by a spring, this plate of metal was released, and sliding over grooves, shot forth arrows.

Catapults were frequently called onagers, because they were like wild asses which throw stones by kicking; and the ballistas were called scorpions because of a hook fastened on the tablet, which, on being lowered with a blow of the fist, disengaged the spring.

Their construction required expert calculation. The timber selected had to be of the hardest grain; the gearing was all of brass. They were stretched with levers, pulleys, capstans, or drums; strong pivots changed the direction of their aim. They were moved forward on cylinders; and those of the largest size, which were transported in sections, were set up in front of the enemy.

Spendius placed the three large catapults opposite the three principal angles; before each gate he placed a ram, before each tower a ballista; and farther back were wheeled the *carroballistæ*. But it was necessary to prevent their being fired on by the besieged, and also to fill up the trench which separated them from the walls.

They pushed forward galleries made of green wattles and oaken ribs, like enormous shields sliding on three wheels; little cabins, covered with fresh hides and padded with wrack, sheltered the workmen. The catapults and ballistas were protected by curtains of rope that had been soaked in vinegar to render them incombustible. The women and children went to the beach to gather stones, which they collected with their hands and brought to the soldiers.

Meantime, the Carthaginians were also making their preparations.

Hamilcar had reassured them, by declaring that there yet remained enough water in the cisterns for one hundred and

twenty-three days. This statement, his presence in their midst, and the recovery of the Zaïmph, above all, imparted great hope. Carthage recovered from her dejection, and those who were not of Canaanite origin were carried away by the enthusiasm of the others.

The slaves were armed, the arsenals emptied, each citizen had his allotted post and task. Twelve hundred of the refugees had survived: the Suffete made them all captains; and the carpenters, armourers, blacksmiths, and the silversmiths were appointed to superintend the war engines, of which the Carthaginians had retained a few, despite the conditions of the Roman peace. Understanding their construction, they repaired them readily.

The northern and eastern sides, being protected by the sea and the gulf, were inaccessible. On the wall facing the Barbarians were piled up tree-trunks, mill-stones, vases full of sulphur, vats full of oil; and furnaces were built. Stones were heaped up on the platforms of the towers, and the houses immediately adjacent to the ramparts were crammed with sand to increase their strength and thickness.

The sight of all these preparations angered the Barbarians. They wanted to engage in combat at once. The weights they put into the catapults were so excessively heavy that the beams broke, thereby delaying the attack.

Finally, on the thirteenth day of the month of Schamar, at sunrise, a tremendous blow was heard at the gate of Khamoûn.

Seventy-five soldiers were hauling ropes arranged at the base of a gigantic beam horizontally suspended by chains, descending from a gallows, and terminating in a brazen ram's head. It was swathed in hides; bands of iron encircled it from place to place, and it was three times thicker than a man's body, one hundred and twenty cubits long, and it advanced or receded under the crowd of naked arms, pushing it forward or hauling it backward, with a regular swing.

The rams before the other gates also began to move; in the hollow wheels of the drums men might be seen ascending step by step. Pulleys and capitals creaked; the rope screens were

lowered, and volleys of stones and arrows simultaneously shot forth. All the scattered slingers ran up; some of them approached the ramparts, carrying hidden under their shields pots of lighted resin; then they hurled them with all their might upon the enemy. The terrific hail of balls, darts, and fire passed beyond the front ranks, in a curve that made it fall within the walls. But on their summits were erected huge cranes such as were used for masting vessels; from them descended enormous pinchers, ending in two semicircles, toothed on the inside edge. These bit the rams. The soldiers, clinging to the beam, dragged it back. The Carthaginians panted in their efforts to haul it up, and the struggle continued till evening.

When the Mercenaries resumed their task the next day they found the tops of the walls packed with bales of cotton, cloth, and cushions; the battlements were closed with mattings, and between the cranes could be distinguished lines of pitchforks and sharp blades set in sticks. A furious defense had begun.

Tree-trunks fastened to cables fell and rose alternately, battering the rams; grappling-irons, shot by the ballistas, tore the roofs off the cabins; and from the platforms of the towers fell torrents of flint and round stones.

At length the rams burst the gate of Khamoûn and that of Tagaste; but the Carthaginians had heaped the inner side with such an abundance of materials that the leaves could not open: they remained upright.

Tenebras were then forced against the walls, and applied to the joints of the massive blocks until they were loosened. The engines were handled better because their crews worked in relays; from morning till evening they plied uninterruptedly, with the monotonous precision of a weaver's loom.

Spendius never wearied of directing the operations. It was he who tightened the cords of the ballistas. In order that there should be an exact equality in their twin tensions, their cords were wound up and struck in turn on the right and left side till both sounded equally. Spendius climbed upon their frames, and delicately tapped them with the end of his foot, straining his ear, like a musician tuning a lyre. Then when the beam of the

catapult rose, when the pillar of the ballista trembled at the shock of the spring, as the stones poured out in streams and the arrows darted forth like rays, he leaned his entire body over the platform, throwing his arms up in the air, as if he would follow the flight of the missiles.

Admiring his skill, the soldiers willingly obeyed his orders. In the gaiety of their labour they made jokes on the names of the engines. Thus the pliers for seizing the rams were called "wolves," and the covered galleries, "vines"; they were lambs, they were going to the vintage; and as they were loading their pieces they would say to the onagers, "Go now, kick well!"—and to the scorpions, "Pierce through the enemies' hearts!" This facetiousness, always the same, sustained their courage.

Still, the engines did not demolish the rampart. It was formed of a double wall and completely filled with earth; they battered down its upper works, but the besieged each time raised them again. Mâtho ordered the construction of wooden towers of an equal height with the enemies' stone towers. Into the moat were thrown turf, stakes, and chariots with the wheels on, to fill it up more rapidly; before it was completed the immense crowd of Barbarians rolled over the plain in a single movement, and advanced to beat against the base of the walls like an inundating sea.

They brought forward rope-ladders, straight ladders, and *sambucæ*, which consisted of two masts from which were lowered by tackles a series of bamboos ending in a movable bridge. They were in numerous straight lines, supported against the walls, and the Mercenaries mounted them in file, one after another, holding their weapons in their hands. Not one Carthaginian appeared until they had attained two thirds of the height of the ramparts. Then the battlements opened, vomiting forth like dragons' jaws fire and smoke; sand scattered, filtering through the joints of their armour; the petroleum fastened on their clothing, the molten lead skipped over their helmets, burning cruel holes in their flesh; a shower of sparks flashed into their faces—and eyeless orbits seemed to weep tears as large as almonds. The hair of some, yellow with oil,

was blazing. They started to run, and set fire to others. From a distance cloaks soaked in blood were thrown over their faces and extinguished the flames. Some who were not wounded remained motionless, stiffer than stakes, with open mouth and arms thrown wide apart.

For many successive days the assault continued, the Mercenaries hoping to triumph by excess of force and audacity.

Sometimes a man, standing on the shoulders of another, would drive an iron pin between the stones to serve as a step to reach higher, where he drove a second, and a third, and so on, protected by the overhanging battlements; in this way they gradually climbed up: but always at a certain height they were smitten and fell. The broad ditch became so full of human beings that it overflowed; under the feet of the living the wounded were heaped pell-mell with the dead and dying. Amid entrails, oozing brains, and pools of blood, charred torsos stood out blackly; arms and legs, half protruding from the heap, stood straight up like vinestakes in a burning vineyard.

As the ladders proved insufficient, they employed the *tollenones*—instruments consisting of a long beam placed transversely on an upright post, and carrying at the extremity a square basket, which held thirty fully armed foot-soldiers.

Mâtho wanted to ascend in the first that was ready, but Spen-dius prevented him.

Men turned a small wheel, and responsively the large beam became horizontal, then reared itself almost vertically; but being too heavily laden at the end, it bent like a reed. The soldiers, hidden up to their chins, crowded together; nothing but their helmet plumes could be seen. Finally, when the basket was fifty cubits in the air, it swayed from right to left several times, then fell; and like the arm of a giant holding on his hand a cohort of pigmies, it deposited on the edge of the wall the basketful of men. They leaped out in the midst of their enemies, but never returned.

All the other *tollenones* were speedily prepared; but it would require a hundred times as many to capture the town. They were utilised in a murderous manner: Ethiopian archers were

placed in the baskets; then the cables were so adjusted that they should remain suspended in mid-air, while the occupants fired poisoned arrows. The fifty *tollenones* thus dominated the battlements surrounding Carthage like monstrous vultures, and the Negroes laughed to see the guards on the ramparts dying in horrible convulsions.

Hamilcar despatched hoplites thither; and each morning they were made to drink the juices of certain herbs which were antidotes for poisons.

One evening, when the sky was overcast, Hamilcar embarked the best of his soldiers on lighters and rafts, and turned to the right of the harbour, landing on the Tænia. From there they advanced as far as the first lines of the Barbarians, and, taking them in the flank, made a terrible carnage. Men suspended by ropes descended the walls during the night, and set fire to the Mercenaries' works, remounting in safety.

Mâtho was enraged; each obstacle, in fact, plunged him deeper in wrath, causing him to do terrible and extravagant things. Mentally he entreated Salammbô for a rendezvous; then waited for her. She did not come: this was a new treason, and henceforth he cursed her. Perhaps if he had seen her dead body he might have gone away. He doubled his outposts, planted pitchforks at the base of the rampart, buried caltrops in the ground, and commanded the Libyans to bring him an entire forest, in order to set fire to Carthage and burn it like a den of foxes.

Spendius persisted in the siege, striving to invent frightful machines such as had never been constructed before. The other Barbarians who were encamped at a distance on the isthmus were amazed at these delays. They complained; they were let loose.

Then they rushed forward, battering against the gates with their cutlasses and javelins. But the nakedness of their bodies made it easy to wound them, and the Carthaginians freely massacred them, while the Mercenaries rejoiced over it, doubtless from greed of the plunder. There resulted quarrels and contentions among themselves. The country being now laid waste,

they were stung by hunger and soon were wresting the provisions from each other. They became discouraged. Numerous hordes went away; but the crowd was so dense that their absence was not noticed.

The best of the men endeavoured to dig mines; the ground, badly propped, caved in; then they would begin again elsewhere. Hamilcar always discovered the direction of their operations by applying his ear to a bronze shield. He dug countermines under the road over which the wooden towers had to be wheeled, so that when they were moved they would sink into the holes.

At length all acknowledged that the city was impregnable unless they erected a long terrace as high as the city walls, which would permit them to fight on the same level; the top should be paved, in order to facilitate the moving of the engines. Then Carthage could not possibly resist.

The town was suffering from thirst. Water, which at the outbreak of the siege sold at two *kesitah* a barrel, now brought a shekel of silver. The supplies of meat and grain were also becoming exhausted; a famine was feared; some even spoke of useless mouths, which terrified everyone.

From the square of Khamoûn as far as the temple of Melkarth, corpses cumbered the streets; and as it was the end of summer, large black flies pestered the combatants. Old men carried the wounded off the field, and the devout continually performed fictitious funeral rites for their relatives and friends who had died far away during the wars. Statues of wax with hair and clothes were laid out before the house entrances. They melted in the heat of the tapers burning close to them, and the paint trickled down over their shoulders; and tears coursed the cheeks of the living as they intoned sad hymns beside these effigies. The crowd meanwhile ran hither and thither; troops were constantly passing; captains shouted orders, and the shocks of the rams battering the rampart were constantly heard.

The heat became so oppressive that the corpses swelled and

could not be placed in the coffins, so they were burned in the middle of the courts. These fires in the narrow spaces ignited the neighbouring walls, and long flames suddenly shot from the houses, like blood spurting from an open artery. Thus Moloch possessed Carthage, he embraced the ramparts, he rolled through all the streets, and he consumed the dead.

Men who wore mantles of rags as a sign of despair, stationed themselves at the corners of the streets, declaiming against the Elders and against Hamilcar, predicting total ruin for the people, and inviting them to general destruction and license. The most dangerous were the drinkers of henbane, who in their cries fancied themselves to be wild beasts, and sprang upon the passers-by, to tear them to pieces. Mobs collected around them, forgetting the defence of Carthage. The Suffete conceived the idea of paying others of their class to support his policy.

In order to retain the Genii of the gods in the town, their images were covered with chains, black veils were thrown over the *Dii Patæci*, and hair cloths around the altars. Endeavours were made to excite the pride and jealousy of the Baals by dinning in their ears, "You will be conquered! The other gods are more powerful than you! Show your might! Aid us! that the peoples may not say, 'Where now are their gods?'"

A constant anxiety disturbed the pontiffs; those of Rabbetna were especially alarmed, for the reëstablishment of the Zaïmph had not sufficed; they remained sequestered in the third enclosure, as impregnable as a fortress; only one of their number, the high priest, Schahabarim, risked venturing forth.

He went to Salammbô's palace, but he remained silent, looking at her with fixed gaze; or else poured upon her words of reproach, harsher than ever.

By an inconceivable inconsistency, he could not pardon this young girl for having obeyed his orders. Schahabarim had divined all—and this obsession strengthened the jealousy of his impotency. He accused her of being the cause of the war. Mâtho, according to his account, was besieging Carthage to recapture the Zaïmph; and he poured forth imprecations and sar-

casms upon this Barbarian for essaying to possess sacred things. That, however, was not what the priest wished to say.

But Salammbô was no longer afraid of the priest. The agonies she formerly suffered had all vanished, being replaced by an ineffable calm; even her gaze was less wandering, and burned with a limpid light.

Meanwhile the python had again fallen ill, and as Salammbô, on the contrary, appeared to recover, the aged Taanach rejoiced over it, feeling sure that by its decline it had taken the weakness from her mistress.

One morning the slave found it behind the cow-hide couch, coiled up on itself, colder than marble, its head covered by a mass of worms. Salammbô came in answer to her screams. She turned it over for some time with the toe of her sandal; her indifference amazed the slave.

Hamilcar's daughter no longer fasted with her former fervour or rigour. She spent whole days on the top of her terrace, leaning on her elbows over the balustrade, amusing herself watching the objects before her. The top of the walls at the end of the town cut irregular zig-zags against the sky, and the row of sentinels' lances formed what looked like a border of corn-ears. Beyond, between the towers, she could watch the manœuvres of the Barbarians. On days when the siege was suspended she could even distinguish their occupations, as they mended their weapons, oiled their hair, or washed their blood-stained arms in the sea. Their tents were closed, and the beasts of burden were eating; far away the scythes of the chariots, ranged in a semicircle, looked like a silver scimitar extended at the base of the hills.

Schahabarim's talk revolved through her brain. She waited for her betrothed, Narr' Havas. Despite her hatred, she had a wish to see Mâtho again. Of all the Carthaginians, she was, perhaps, the only person who would have spoken to him without fear.

Frequently her father came into her room and sat on the cushions, considering her with an air almost tender, as if he found in looking at her an immunity from his weariness. Some-

times he questioned her as to the incidents of her journey to the camp of the Mercenaries, asking her if no one had by chance compelled her to go thither; and with a shake of the head, she answered, "No," so proud was Salammbô of having rescued the Zaïmph.

But the Suffete always reverted to Mâtho, under the pretext of acquiring military information. He could not understand how she had employed the hours passed in his tent. Salammbô did not mention Gisco; for as words contain in themselves an effective power, curses that are repeated to anyone else might return to their injury. She likewise kept silent concerning her impulse to assassinate Mâtho, fearful lest she should be censured for not having yielded to it. She said that the *Schalischim* appeared furious, that he had shouted a good deal, and afterward went to sleep. Salammbô told nothing more, perhaps from shame, or possibly from an excess of innocence, which caused her to attach no importance to the kisses of the soldier. Besides, it all floated through her melancholy and misty brain like the remembrance of an overpowering dream, and she would not have known in what manner or by what words to express it.

One evening, when father and daughter were thus facing each other in conversation, Taanach, all amazement, entered, announcing that an old man, accompanied by a child, was in the courts, and asking to see the Suffete.

Hamilcar turned pale, but promptly replied:

"Let him come up."

Iddibal entered, without prostrating himself, holding by the hand a young boy covered with a cloak of goat's skin, and at once raising the hood which concealed the boy's face, said:

"Here he is, master! Take him!"

The Suffete and the slave retired to a corner of the room. The boy remained standing in the centre with a gaze more attentive than astonished; he looked at the ceiling, the furniture, the pearl necklaces hung over purple draperies, and at the majestic maiden who leaned forward toward him.

He was, perhaps, ten years old, and no taller than a Roman

sword; his curly hair overshadowed his rounded forehead; his eyes seemed to penetrate space; his thin nostrils dilated widely, and over all his person was that indefinable splendour which characterises beings destined for grand careers. When he had thrown aside his heavy cloak, he remained clad in a lynx-skin fastened around his waist, and stood resolutely pressing his small, bare feet, white with dust, upon the pavement. Doubtless he surmised that important topics were being discussed, as he maintained a motionless posture, holding one hand behind his back, his chin lowered and a forefinger in his mouth.

At last Hamilcar attracted Salammbô's attention by a sign, and said in a low voice: "Keep him with you. Do you understand? No one, not even of the household, must know of his existence."

Then, behind the door, he again asked Iddibal if he were certain that no one had noticed them.

"No one," said the slave; "the streets were deserted."

As the war filled all the provinces, he had feared for the safety of his master's son. Then, not knowing where to hide him, Iddibal had brought him along the coast in a shallop, and for three days they had cruised about in the gulf, watching the ramparts; finally, that evening, when the neighborhood of Khamoûn seemed deserted, he had ventured to cross the channel quickly and land in the vicinity of the arsenal—the entrance to the harbour being free to all.

But soon the Barbarians established, opposite it, an immense raft, to prevent the Carthaginians getting out. They built up the proposed terrace, and erected the wooden towers.

Communication between the towns and the outside was cut off, and an intolerable famine began.

All the dogs, mules, and asses were killed; and then the fifteen elephants that the Suffete had brought back. The lions of the temple of Moloch became savage, and the keepers no longer dared approach them; at first they were fed with wounded Barbarians; then corpses yet warm were thrown to them; but these they refused; and finally they all died. At twilight people wandered along the old enclosures, gathering from between

the stones grasses and flowers, which they boiled in wine, as wine was less costly than water. Others slipped up to the outposts of the enemy, and, crawling under the tents, stole food. Sometimes the Barbarians were so stupefied by this audacity that they allowed them to return. At length a day came when the Elders resolved to slaughter the horses of Eschmoûn privately; they were sacred animals in whose manes the Pontiffs braided gold ribbons, and whose existence signified the movements of the sun—the idea of fire in its most exalted form. Their flesh was divided into equal portions, and hidden behind the altar; then every evening the Elders, alleging some religious service, ascended to the temple, regaled themselves in secret, and each brought back, concealed under his tunic, some morsel for his children. In the deserted quarters distant from the walls, the less miserable inhabitants, from fear of the others, had barricaded themselves.

The stones from the catapults, and the materials ordered for defence, had accumulated in piles of rubble in the streets. During the most peaceful hours, masses of people would suddenly rush out, yelling at the top of their voices; and from the top of the Acropolis fires appeared, like purple rags blown by the wind, dispersed over the terraces.

The three great catapults did not stop: their ravages were extraordinary; a man's head rebounded from the pediment of the Syssites; in the street of Kinisdo a woman in childbirth was crushed by a block of marble, and her infant, with her couch, was carried as far as the forum of Cynasyn, where the coverlet was found.

The slingers' bullets proved to be the most vexatious missiles; these fell upon the roofs, into gardens, and in the middle of courtyards, where people were at table before their meagre repasts, with their hearts heavy with anguish. These horrible projectiles were engraved with letters that left an imprint on the victim's flesh; on the dead could be read such appellations as "*swine*," "*jackal*," "*vermin*," and sometimes such pleasantries as "*catch!*" or "*I have quite deserved it!*"

That portion of the rampart extending from the angle of the

harbours to the cisterns was battered in. Then the people of Malqua found themselves caught between the old enclosure of Byrsa in the rear, and the Barbarians in front. Hamilcar had enough to do to strengthen the wall and raise it as high as possible, without troubling himself about the misfortune of these people. They were abandoned, and all perished; and although they were generally hated, the Carthaginians were horrified because Hamilcar had deserted them.

The following day he opened the pits wherein he had stored his corn: his intendants gave it freely to the people. For three days they gorged themselves. Their thirst in consequence became more intolerable, and they always saw before them the long cascade of pure water falling from the aqueduct: while under the sunshine the fine mist floated up from its base with a rainbow beside it, and a little serpentine stream curved over the plain and emptied itself into the gulf.

Hamilcar did not weaken, for he was counting upon something happening,—something decisive and extraordinary. His own slaves tore off the silver plates from the temple of Melkarth. Four long boats were taken from the harbour and dragged by means of capstans to the foot of Mappals, the wall abutting on the shore was pierced; and they departed to Gallia, to hire mercenary soldiers at any price. Nevertheless Hamilcar was disturbed at his inability to communicate with the Numidian king, as he knew full well that he was stationed behind the Barbarians, and ready to fall upon them. But Narr' Havas's forces were too weak to risk making any venture alone. The Suffete had the rampart heightened twelve palms, all the munitions of war in the arsenals collected in the Acropolis, and the engines repaired once more.

As a rule they used as cordage for the catapults tendons taken from the necks of bulls, or else stags' hamstrings; but in Carthage there were no longer either bulls or stags. Hamilcar demanded from the Elders their wives' tresses; and though all made the sacrifice, the quantity was insufficient. There were, in the buildings of the Syssites, twelve hundred marriageable slaves, intended for prostitution in Greece and Italy, and their

hair had become peculiarly elastic from the constant use of unguents, and was admirably suited for the war machines. But afterward the loss would be too considerable. Then it was determined to select the finest heads of hair among the wives of the plebeians. Indifferent to their country's needs, all the women cried out in despair when the servitors of the Hundred came with scissors to lay hands upon them.

An increased fury animated the Barbarians, for from a distance they could be seen taking fat from the dead, to oil their machines, and pulling out the finger and toe nails of the corpses, which they sewed one overlapping another, to make breastplates for themselves.

They conceived the idea of charging their catapults with vases full of serpents brought by the Negroes; these clay vessels shattered, in falling upon the flagstones, and the serpents crawling about were so numerous that they seemed to swarm, and to come naturally out of the walls. Discontented with this invention they improved upon it, and threw all kinds of filth—such as human excrement, morsels of carrion, and corpses—upon their enemy. The plague broke out. The teeth of the Carthaginians fell from their mouths, and their gums became discoloured, like those of camels after too protracted a journey.

The Barbarians' war machines were mounted upon the new terrace, even though it failed as yet to reach at every point the height of the rampart. In front of the twenty-three towers on the fortifications were erected twenty-three wooden towers; all the *tollenones* were remounted, and in the centre, a little further back, loomed up the formidable *helepolis* of Demetrius Poliorcetes, which Spendius had at last reconstructed. Pyramidal, like the lighthouse at Alexandria, it was one hundred and thirty cubits high and twenty-three wide, with nine stories diminishing towards the top; they were protected by brass scales pierced by numerous sally-ports, and filled with soldiers; on the topmost stage a catapult flanked by two ballistas was erected.

Hamilcar planted crosses upon which to crucify all those who talked of surrender. Even the women were formed in brigades. People slept in the streets, and waited with anguished hearts.

Then one morning, a little before sunrise, on the seventh day of the month of Nyssan, they heard a loud shout uttered simultaneously by all the Barbarians; the lead trumpets blared, and the great Paphlagonian horns bellowed like bulls. There was an immediate rush for the rampart.

A forest of lances, pikes, and spears bristled at its base; it leaped against the walls, ladders were grappled on, and in the openings of the battlements Barbarians' heads appeared.

Beams, carried by long files of men, battered the gates; and in places where the terrace was lacking, the Mercenaries, in order to breach the wall, came up in close cohorts, the first line crouching down, the second bending their hips, while the others rose in succession, by gradual inclinations of their bodies, until the last stood bolt upright; while elsewhere, to climb up, the tallest advanced at the head, the shortest in the rear; and they all supported with their left arms above their helmets their shields, locked together so tightly by the rims that they appeared like an assemblage of large tortoises. The projectiles slid over these slanting masses.

The Carthaginians hurled millstones, pestles, vats, casks, couches, everything, in fact, that could make a crushing weight. Some watched in the embrasures with fishing nets, and when a Barbarian came up he found himself caught in the meshes, and struggled like a floundering fish. They themselves demolished their own battlements; portions of the walls fell down, stirring up a blinding dust. The catapults on the terrace and those on the ramparts shot one against the other, the stones clashed together and shattered into a thousand fragments, falling in a wide shower upon the combatants.

Soon the two crowds formed but one thick chain of human bodies, overflowing into the intervals of the terrace, and a little relaxed at the ends, swayed perpetually without advancing.

They grappled one another, lying flat on the ground like wrestlers, and were crushed. Women leaned over the battlements and shrieked. They were dragged forward by their veils, and the whiteness of their flanks, suddenly uncovered, gleamed between the arms of the Negroes, as daggers were plunged into them.

Some corpses were too closely packed in the crowd to fall, but, borne up by the shoulders of their comrades, they moved forward for some minutes quite upright, their eyes staring wide.

Some, pierced through both temples with javelins, swayed their heads like bears; their mouths opened to scream, but remained silently agape; severed hands flew through the air. There were mighty blows, of which the survivors spoke many a long day afterward.

Meanwhile arrows darted from the tops of the wooden and stone towers. The long yards of the *tollenones* moved rapidly; and as the Barbarians had pillaged the ancient cemetery of the Autochthones beneath the Catacombs, they hurled the tombstones upon the Carthaginians. Under the weight of the baskets, too heavily laden, the cables sometimes broke, and numbers of men, wildly throwing up their arms, fell from the sky.

Until noon the veterans of the hoplites had fiercely attacked the Tænia, in order to penetrate into the harbour and destroy the fleet. On the roof of Khamoûn Hamilcar had lighted a fire of damp straw, the smoke from which blinded them; they fell back to the left, increasing the horrible crowd which pressed forward in Malqua. Some syntagmas, composed of strong men expressly chosen, had forced three of the gates. Then high barriers, constructed with boards studded with nails, barred their way; a fourth entrance readily yielded; they darted beyond, and ran forward, only to roll into a pit in which traps had been hidden. At the south-east angle Autharitus and his men beat down the rampart, the fissure of which had been stopped up with bricks. Behind, the ground sloped upward; they climbed slowly, but found on top a second wall, composed of stones and long beams lying flat, alternating like the squares on a chess-board. This was a Gallic method adapted by the Suffete to the requirements of the situation. The Gauls thought themselves in front of a town of their own country. They attacked half-heartedly, and they were repulsed.

All the territory from the street of Khamoûn to the Vegetable Market now belonged to the Barbarians, and the Sam-

nites finished the dying with blows of their spears, or else with one foot on the wall contemplated the smoking ruins beneath them, and the battle which had begun again in the distance.

The slingers distributed in the rear fired incessantly, but from long use the springs of the Acarnanian slings were broken, so, like shepherds, many slung the stones with their hands; others shot the lead balls with the handles of whips. Zarxas, with his long black hair covering his shoulders, was everywhere and led on the Balearians; two pouches were suspended from his hips; into one he kept plunging his left hand, while his right arm whirled like the wheel of a chariot.

Mâtho had at first held back from the combat, so that he might the more effectually command all his forces at once. He had been seen along the gulf shore with the Mercenaries; near the Lagoon with the Numidians; then on the lake shore amongst the Negroes; at the end of the plain he pushed forward masses of soldiers, who advanced incessantly against the line of the fortifications. Gradually he drew nearer; the odour of blood, the sight of carnage, and the fanfare of clarions, had finally set his heart to pounding. Then he entered his tent, threw aside his cumbersome breast-plate, taking instead his lion-skin, which was more convenient for battle. The muzzle fitted on his head, and surrounded his face with a circle of fangs; the two fore-paws crossed over his breast, and the claws of the hind-paws reached down to his knees.

He kept on his strong waist-belt, in which flashed a double-edged battle-axe; then, holding his large sword in both hands, he plunged impetuously through the breach. Like a pruner lopping off willow branches, endeavouring to cut as many as possible in order to earn more money, he moved about, mowing down Carthaginians on all sides of him. Those who tried to clutch his sides he knocked down with the pommel of his sword; when they attacked him in front he pierced them through; and if they took flight he slashed them down.

Two men simultaneously jumped upon his back: he leaped backward crushing them against a door at a single bound. His sword rose and fell; at last it shattered against an angle of the

wall. Then he took his heavy axe, and from behind and in front he disembowelled the Carthaginians like a flock of sheep. They scattered more and more before him; slaying right and left, he arrived alone, before the second enclosure, at the foot of the Acropolis. Materials that had been flung from the summit encumbered the steps, and overflowed beyond the walls. Mâtho, in the midst of these ruins, turned around to call his comrades.

He saw their crests scattered through the multitude—they were being surrounded: they would perish. He dashed toward them; then the vast crowd of red plumes uniting, quickly rejoined and surrounded him. But the side streets disgorged an enormous throng, and he was swept up and carried away to the outside of the rampart, to a spot where the terrace was high.

Mâtho shouted a command: all the shields were levelled above the helmets; he leaped on them to catch hold of something that might enable him to scale the walls and reënter Carthage, and brandished his terrible battle-axe as he ran over the shields, that resembled bronze waves, like a marine god on the billows shaking his trident.

Meanwhile a man in a white robe walked on the edge of the rampart, impassive and indifferent to the death surrounding him. At times he extended his right hand to shade his eyes, as if he sought for someone. Mâtho passed beneath him. All at once his eyes flamed, his livid face contracted, and, lifting his meagre arms, he shouted out words of abuse.

Mâtho heard them not; but he felt a look of such cruelty and fury enter his heart that he uttered a roar. He hurled his long axe toward this man; soldiers threw themselves upon Schahabarim, and Mâtho, losing sight of him, fell backward exhausted.

A fearful creaking drew near, mingled with the rhythm of hoarse voices singing in unison.

A vast throng of soldiers surrounded the *helepolis*; they dragged it with both hands, hauled it with ropes, and pushed it with their shoulders—for the slope rising from the plain to the platform, though it was extremely gentle, proved impracticable for machines of such prodigious weight. It had eight

iron-bound wheels, and since morning it had advanced thus slowly; it was like one mountain being lifted to the summit of another.

From the base of this machine an enormous ram projected; along the three sides facing the city the doors were lowered, and inside appeared mailed soldiers, like iron columns, who could be seen climbing and descending the two stairways that traversed the stories. Some of these men were in readiness to spring the moment the grapples of the doors should touch the wall. In the middle of the upper platform the skeins of the ballistas were turning and the great beam of the catapult kept descending.

Hamilcar was at this moment standing on the roof of Melkarth; he judged that the beam would come directly toward him, against the most invulnerable portion of the wall, which on that account was denuded of sentinels. For a long time his slaves had been carrying leather water-bottles to the circular road, where two transverse partitions of clay had been constructed to form a sort of basin. The water ran senselessly over the terrace, and yet Hamilcar did not seem to be disturbed by this waste.

But when the *helepolis* was about thirty paces off, he commanded that boards should be placed between the houses over the streets, from the cisterns to the rampart, and that the people should form in a file and pass from hand to hand helmets and amphoras filled with water, that were continually emptied. The Carthaginians waxed indignant at this extravagant waste of water. The ram was demolishing the wall; suddenly a fountain sprang up from the disjointed stones, and the brazen structure of nine stages, containing more than three thousand soldiers, began to sway gently, like a ship rocking on the billows.

In fact, the water had penetrated the terrace and undermined the road before the machine; the wheels were imbedded in mire. Between the leather curtains on the first stage, Spendius's head appeared, blowing lustily through an ivory horn. The mammoth machine convulsively moved about ten more paces; but the ground became softer and softer, the mire reached up

to the axle-trees, then the huge *helepolis* stopped, listing fearfully to one side. The catapult rolled to the edge of the platform, and, carried away by the weight of its beam, toppled off, crushing the lower stages in pieces beneath it. The soldiers who were standing in the doors slid into the abyss, or held on to the extremities of the long beam, and by their weight increased the tilt of the *helepolis*, which was now breaking up and cracking in all its joints.

The other Barbarians rushed to the rescue, crowding in a compact mass. The Carthaginians swept down over the rampart and attacked them from behind, killing them at their ease. But the chariots armed with scythes came speedily up, galloping around the outside of this multitude, causing them to remount the walls. Night fell, and the Barbarians gradually retired.

Nothing could be seen over the plain but a black, swarming mass, from the bluish gulf to the glittering white Lagoon; and the lake, into which streams of blood had flowed, spread out beyond like a great purple pool.

The terrace was now so encumbered with corpses that it might have been constructed out of human bodies. In the centre stood the *helepolis* covered with armour, and from time to time enormous fragments fell away from it, like stones from a crumbling pyramid. Broad tracks made by the streams of molten lead could be distinguished on the walls; a burning wooden tower here and there had tumbled over, and the houses appeared dimly like the tiers of a ruined amphitheatre. Heavy clouds of smoke curled up, through which whirled trails of sparks that lost themselves in the black sky.

Meantime, the Carthaginians, who were consumed by thirst, had rushed to the cisterns. They broke open the doors: at the bottom lay a muddy puddle.

What would happen now? The Barbarians were innumerable, and when they had recovered from their fatigue would begin again.

All night the people deliberated in groups at the street corners. Some said that they must send away the women, the sick, and the aged. Others proposed to abandon the town, and establish a new colony far away. But ships were wanting; the sun rose and no decision had been reached.

That day there was no fighting, everyone being exhausted. The people slept as if they were dead.

When the Carthaginians reflected upon the cause of their disasters, they remembered that they had neglected to send to Phœnicia the annual offering due to the Tyrian Melkarth, and a vast terror seized them. The gods were indignant with the Republic, and would doubtless pursue her with vengeance.

The divinities were considered in the light of cruel masters, only to be appeased with supplications, and bribed by gifts. All were weak before Moloch—the devourer. Human existence, even the flesh of mankind, belonged to him; therefore, to preserve it, the Carthaginians were wont to offer a portion of it to him, which calmed his wrath. Children were burned on their foreheads, or on the napes of their necks, with woollen wicks; and this custom of seeking to satisfy the Baal brought considerable money to the priests; they rarely failed to recommend the easiest and least painful method of sacrifice.

But now it was a question of the very existence of the Republic. And as every profit must be purchased by some loss, and every transaction is regulated by the requirements of the weaker and the demands of the stronger, there was no suffering too great for the god, since he took delight in the most horrible, and they all were now at his mercy. He must therefore be completely satiated. Precedents showed that carnal sacrifices to him had compelled the scourge to disappear. Besides, it was believed an immolation by fire would purify Carthage. The ferocity of the people was in favour of it beforehand, inasmuch as the choice of victims must fall exclusively on the great families.

The Elders assembled. Their session was long. Hanno was present, but as he was now unable to sit up, he remained lying near the entrance, half hidden in the fringes of the lofty tapestry; and when the pontiff of Moloch asked if those convened

consented to deliver up their children, his voice suddenly broke forth from the shadows as the roaring of a spirit out of the depths of a cavern. He regretted, he said, that he had none of his own blood to give, and he significantly looked at Hamilcar, who faced him at the other end of the hall. The Suffete was so disturbed by this gaze that he lowered his eyes. All approved by nodding their heads successively; and, according to the rites, he had to reply to the high priest, "Yes, so be it!" Then the Elders decreed the sacrifice by a traditional periphrasis—for there are things more difficult to say than to do.

The decision was made known throughout Carthage, and lamentations resounded. Everywhere women were heard crying; their husbands either consoled them or heaped invectives upon them for offering remonstrance.

Three hours afterwards extraordinary news was spread among the people: the Suffete had discovered springs at the base of the cliff. All rushed to the place; holes had been dug in the sand, showing water; and already some were lying flat on their bellies drinking.

Hamilcar did not himself know whether it was an inspiration from the gods or the indistinct recollection of a revelation his father had formerly made to him; but, on leaving the conference of Elders, he had gone down to the beach with his slaves, and begun digging in the gravel.

He distributed clothing, shoes, and wine, and the balance of the grain stored in his vaults; he even admitted populace to his palace, opening the kitchens, magazines, and all the rooms except Salammô's. He announced that six thousand Gallic Mercenaries were coming, and that the king of Macedonia was also sending soldiers.

On the second day after the discovery of the springs, the volume of water had considerably diminished, and on the evening of the third day they were completely dry. Then the Elders' former decree circulated anew on all lips, and the priests of Moloch began preparations for the sacrifice.

Men in black robes presented themselves at the houses; many of the inhabitants had deserted them on pretence of busi-

ness, or of some dainty that they must buy. The servitors of Moloch came and took the children. Others, stupidly scared, delivered them up. They were all conveyed to the temple of Tanit, to the priestesses, who were ordered to amuse and feed them until the solemn day.

They arrived suddenly at Hamilcar's palace, and finding him in his gardens, said: "Barca! You know for what we have come—your son!" They added that some people had met the boy one night during the last moon, in the middle of Mappals, led by an old man.

At first he felt as though his breath had been taken from him; but quickly realising that denial would be in vain, he bowed his head, and introduced them into his house of commerce. His slaves, at a gesture from him, ran to keep watch around it.

He entered Salammbô's room, in a frenzy, seized Hannibal by one hand, and with the other tore from a trailing robe some strings, with which he fastened the boy's hands and feet together, placing the ends of the strings in his mouth as a gag, and hid him under the cowhide couch, arranging some wide drapery so that it fell all about the couch to the floor.

Then he paced up and down the room, raised his arms, wheeled around, bit his lips; then halted, with his eyes fixed, and gasping as though he were dying.

At length, he clapped his hands three times. Giddenem appeared.

"Listen!" said he. "Go and take from amongst the slaves a male child of eight or nine years, with black hair and a swelling forehead! Bring him here! Hasten!"

Giddenem soon returned, and presented a boy.

He was a wretched child, at once thin and bloated; his skin greyish, like the loathsome rags that clung to his loins. He hung his head, and rubbed his eyes, which were full of flies, with the back of his hands.

"How could anyone possibly take him for Hannibal! and there is no time to choose another!" Hamilcar looked at Giddenem, wishing to strangle him.

“Go!” cried he; and the Master of Slaves fled.

The sorrow which the Suffete had so long a time apprehended had come, and he sought with immeasurable efforts to discern if there were no manner, no way of averting it.

Abdalonim spoke from the other side of the door: the servitors of Moloch were becoming impatient, and asked for the Suffete.

Hamilcar suppressed a cry; he experienced a pang akin to the seething burn from a red-hot iron; he began anew to pace the floor like a madman; then he sank down near the balustrade, and with his elbows on his knees, pressed his temples between his clenched hands.

The porphyry basin still contained a small quantity of clean water for Salammbô's ablutions. Despite his repugnance and all his pride, the Suffete plunged the slave's child into the basin, and like a slave merchant washed and scrubbed the boy with strigils and red earth. Then he took from the cases surrounding the walls two squares of purple; of these he put one on the child's breast, the other on his back, pinning them over the collar-bone with two diamond agrafes; he poured perfumes over his head, clasped an electrum necklace around his throat, and thrust his plebeian feet into sandals with pearl heels—his daughter's own sandals; but he stamped with shame and anger. Salammbô, who was earnestly assisting him, was quite as pale as he. The child smiled, pleased with these splendours, and even growing bolder, began to clap his hands and jump, when Hamilcar led him forth.

He held him firmly by the arm, as if he feared he should lose him; and the child, hurt by the fierce grasp, whimpered slightly as he ran beside the Suffete.

Abreast of the *ergastulum*, under a palm tree, a voice rose, a lamenting, supplicating voice, murmuring, “Master! oh, master!”

Hamilcar turned, and saw at his side a man most abject in appearance—one of the wretches who lived a haphazard existence in his gardens.

"What do you want?" asked the Suffete. The slave, trembling horribly, stammered:

"I am his father!"

Hamilcar kept on walking; the slave followed, with bent back, and head thrust forward; his face was convulsed by an indescribable agony, and his suppressed sobs stifled him, so anxious was he at once to question him and to cry out "Mercy!"

At length he dared to touch the Suffete's elbow lightly with one finger.

"Are you taking him to the . . .?" He had not the strength to finish, and Hamilcar stopped, amazed at such grief.

He had never thought—so immense was the gulf separating the one from the other—that there could be anything in common between them. It even appeared to him to be a sort of outrage, an encroachment on his own privileges. He replied by a look, colder and heavier than the axe of an executioner; the slave fainted and dropped in the dust at his feet. Hamilcar stepped over him.

The three black-robed men waited in the great hall, standing against the stone disc. All at once the Suffete tore his garments, and rolled upon the stones, uttering sharp cries.

"Ah! poor little Hannibal! Oh! my son! my consolation! my hope! my life! kill me also! Take me! Misery! misery!" he ploughed his face with his finger-nails, and tore out his hair, howling like the mourners at funerals. "Take him away! I suffer too much! Go! go! kill me with him!" The servitors of Moloch were astonished that the great Hamilcar possessed such a faint heart. They were almost touched.

Just then, the noise of naked feet was heard, and with a jerking rattle, like the panting of a ferocious beast when running in pursuit, on the threshold of the third gallery, between the ivory door-posts, a man appeared, pallid, terrible, with outstretched arms, screaming: "My child!"

With a bound Hamilcar fell upon him, covering his mouth with his hands, and exclaiming still more loudly:

"He is the old slave who reared Hannibal! he calls him 'my child'! he will become mad! Enough! enough!" And pushing

out the three priests and their victim, he went out with them, and closed the door behind him with a tremendous kick.

For some time Hamilcar listened attentively, fearing they might return. He next thought of killing the slave, to make quite sure of his not speaking; but the peril had not completely passed, and his death, if the gods were angered at it, might return upon his own son. Then changing his purpose, he sent to him by Taanach the best things from his kitchen—a quarter of a goat, some beans, and preserved pomegranates. The slave, who had not eaten for a long time, flung himself upon the food, whilst his tears fell into the dishes.

Hamilcar now returned to Salammbô, and unknotted Hannibal's cords. The child was so exasperated that he bit the Suffete's hand until he drew blood; he repulsed him with a caress.

To keep the boy quiet, Salammbô tried to frighten him with stories of Lamia—an ogress of Cyrene. "Where is she?" he asked. He was told that the brigands would come to put him in prison; to which he replied, "When they come I shall kill them."

Hamilcar then told him the frightful truth, but he grew angry with his father, declaring that he was able to exterminate the people, since he was the master of Carthage.

At last, exhausted by his struggles and anger, he slept a savage sleep, talking in his dreams, as he lay with his back propped up against a scarlet pillow, his head thrown a trifle backward, and his little arm extended out straight from his body in an imperious attitude.

When the night grew dark Hamilcar lifted the child in his arms, and descended the stairway of the galleys without a torch. In passing through the commercial house he took a bunch of grapes and a jug of pure water. The child awakened before the statue of Aletes, in the vault of gems, and smiled, as the other child had smiled, in the arms of the Suffete, at the splendors surrounding him.

Hamilcar was very certain that no one could now take his son. It was an impenetrable spot, communicating with the shore by a subterranean passage, that he alone knew: he cast his eyes

about him, inhaling a long breath, and placed the boy on a stool beside some golden shields.

No one at present could see them; he had nothing more to heed, and he gave way to his feelings. Like a mother who finds her lost firstborn, he embraced his son, pressing him to his heart; he laughed and wept at the same time, called him by the most endearing names, and covered him with kisses. Little Hannibal, frightened by this terrible tenderness, remained silent.

Hamilcar returned with slow steps, feeling along the walls around him, until he reached the large hall, wherein the moonlight entered through one of the slits in the dome: in the middle the slave slept, lying at full length on the marble. He regarded him, and was moved by a kind of pity. With the toe of his buskin he pushed a rug under his head. Then he lifted his eyes and gazed at Tanit, whose slender crescent was shining in the sky. He felt himself stronger than the Baals, and contemptuous of them.

The preparations were already being made for the sacrifice.

A portion of the wall in the temple of Moloch was removed in order to pull the brazen god through without disturbing the ashes on the altar. As soon as the sun rose the sacred slaves of the temple pushed it towards the square of Khamoûn.

It moved backward, sliding over cylinders; its shoulders overtopped the walls; from the farthest distance the Carthaginians who perceived it fled hastily, for the Baal could not be contemplated with impunity save in the exercise of his wrath.

An odour of aromatics was wafted through the streets. All the temples were thrown open simultaneously, and tabernacles upon chariots, or on litters carried by pontiffs, came forth. Great feathered plumes nodded at their corners, and rays flashed from their pointed spires, terminated by globes of crystal, gold, silver, or copper.

These were the Canaanitish Baalim, reproductions of the supreme Baal, returning towards their essence to humble them-

selves before his might, and be lost in his magnificence. The canopy of Melkarth, of fine purple, sheltered a flame of bitumen oil; while upon that of Khamôûn, which was of hyacinth colour, was erected an ivory phallus bordered with a circle of gems: between the curtains of Eschmoûn, blue as the ether, a python slept, describing a circle with its tail; and the *Dii-Pataci*, held in the arms of their priests, resembled large infants in swaddling clothes, with their feet brushing the ground.

Following came all the inferior forms of divinity: Baal-Samin, god of celestial spaces; Baal-Peor, god of sacred mountains; Baal-Zeboub, god of corruption; and those of the neighboring countries and of cognate races: the Iarbal of Libya; the Adrammelech of Chaldea; the Kijun of the Syrians; Derceto, with her maiden's face, creeping upon her fins; and the body of Tammouz was transported on a catafalque between torches and heads of hair. To subdue the kings of the firmament to the sun, and prevent their individual influence from impeding his, metal stars of divers colours were brandished on the ends of long staves. In this collection all were found, from the black Nebo, which was the genius of Mercury, to the hideous Rahab, the constellation of the Crocodile. The Abaddirs, stones fallen from the moon, revolved in silver filigree slings; small loaves representing the female sex were carried in baskets by the priests of Ceres; others brought their fetiches, their amulets; forgotten idols reappeared; and they had even taken from the ships their mystic symbols, as though Carthage desired to concentrate herself completely in one thought of death and desolation.

Before each of the tabernacles a man balanced on his head a vase of smoking incense; clouds hovered here and there, and through the dense vapours could be discerned the hangings, the pendants, and the embroideries of the sacred pavilions.

In consequence of their enormous weight, they advanced slowly. The axle-trees of the chariots occasionally got caught in the narrow streets; then the devotees profited by the opportunity to touch the Baalim with their clothing, which they afterwards preserved as sacred relics. The brazen statue continued to advance towards the square of Khamoûn. The Rich, carrying

sceptres with emerald balls, started from the far end of Megara; the Elders, crowned with diadems, assembled in Kinisdo; and the masters of finance, the governors of provinces, merchants, soldiers, sailors, and the numerous horde employed at funerals, all displaying the insignia of their magistracy or the instruments of their calling, converged towards the tabernacles that descended from the Acropolis between the colleges of pontiffs.

In deference to Moloch, they were all adorned with their most splendid jewels. Diamonds sparkled on their black apparel; but their rings, now too large, fell loosely from their emaciated hands, and nothing could be more mournful than that silent concourse, where brilliant ear-rings dangled against pallid faces, while gold tiaras encircled foreheads that were wrinkled by profound despair.

Finally the Baal attained the centre of the square. His pontiffs made an enclosure with trellises to keep back the multitude, and prostrated themselves at his feet, surrounding him.

The priests of Khamoûn, in reddish woollen robes, stood in line before their temple beneath the columns of the portico; those of Eschmoûn, in white linen mantles, with necklaces of hoopoe heads and conical tiaras, established themselves on the steps of the Acropolis; the priests of Melkarth, in violet tunics, took their position on the western side; the priests of the Abadirs, encircled in bands of Phrygian stuffs, placed themselves on the eastern side; and ranged on the southern side with the necromancers, entirely covered with tattooings, were the shriekers in patched mantles, the priests of the *Dii-Pataeci*, and the Yidonim, who foretold the future by placing a bone from a dead body in their mouths. The priests of Ceres, habited in blue robes, had prudently stopped in Satheb street, and were intoning in a low voice a thesmophorion in Megarian dialect.

From time to time files of men arrived, completely naked, with arms stretched out, holding each other by the shoulders, giving vent from the depths of their chests to hoarse, cavernous intonations; their eyes were turned toward the Colossus, which shone through the dust, and at intervals they swayed their

bodies in unison, as if shaken by a single movement. In such a frenzy were these men that the sacred slaves could quiet them only by beating them with sticks, and making them lie flat on the ground with their faces against the brazen trellises.

At this moment, from the back of the square, a man in a white robe came forward. As he slowly penetrated the throng, he was recognized as a priest of Tanit—the high-priest Schahabarim. Yells were raised, for the tyranny of the male principle prevailed upon this occasion in all minds, and the goddess was so completely forgotten that no one had even noticed the absence of her pontiffs. But the wonderment doubled when her high-priest was seen to open one of the gates of the trellis, intended to admit only those who would offer victims for the sacrifice. The priests of Moloch, believing that he came to offer an insult to their god, endeavoured to expel him with excited gestures. Nourished as they were by the sacrificial meats, clothed in purple like kings, and wearing triple crowns, they were contemptuous of this pale eunuch priest, emaciated by fasting; an insolent laughter shook their black beards, spread out over their breasts in the sunlight.

Schahabarim, without response, continued to walk forward, crossing, step by step, the whole enclosure, until he arrived beneath the legs of the Colossus; then he threw out his arms and touched it on both sides: this was a solemn act of adoration. Too long the Rabbet had tortured him, and in despair, or perhaps for lack of a god completely satisfying to his mind, he had decided at last to accept Moloch.

The crowd, shocked by this apostasy, uttered a prolonged murmur. They felt that the last tie uniting them to a merciful deity had been severed.

But Schahabarim, because of his mutilation, could not participate in the cult of the Baal. The men in red mantles expelled him from the enclosure; then, when he was outside, he walked around all the other colleges successively, and the priest, now having no god, disappeared in the crowd, which scattered at his approach.

Meantime a fire of aloes, cedar, and laurel wood burned

between the legs of the Colossus. Its long wings buried their points in the flame; the unguents with which it had been rubbed trickled like sweat over its brazen limbs. About the circular stone on which its feet rested, children, enveloped in black veils, formed a motionless circle; and its inordinately long arms allowed the palms of the hands to reach down to them, as if to seize this crown and lift it to the sky.

The Rich, the Elders, the women, and in fact the entire multitude, thronged behind the priests, and on the terraces of the houses. The large, painted stars revolved no longer; the tabernacles were set on the ground, and the smoke from the censers rose on high perpendicularly, like gigantic trees spreading their bluish boughs amid the azure. Many fainted; others became inert and petrified in their ecstasy; infinite agony oppressed their hearts. The noises one by one died out, and the people of Carthage waited in silence, absorbed in their terrified desire.

At last the high-priest of Moloch passed his right hand beneath the children's veils, and pulled out a lock of hair from each of their foreheads, which he threw into the flames. Then the men in red mantles intoned a sacred hymn:

"Homage to thee, O Sun! King of the two Zones! Creator, self-begotten! Father and Mother! Father and Son! God and Goddess! Goddess and God!" And their voices were lost in the outburst of countless instruments, sounding in unison to smother the cries of the victims. The scheminith with eight strings, the kinnor with ten, and the nebel with twelve, all twanged, whistled, and thundered forth. Enormous leathern bottles stuck full of tubes made a sharp, clashing noise; the tambourines, beaten as hard as possible, resounded with heavy, rapid blows; and despite the fury of the clarions, the salsalim clicked like the wings of locusts.

With a long hook the sacred slaves opened the seven compartments contained in the body of the Baal. Into the highest division meal was introduced; into the second, two turtle-doves; into the third, an ape; into the fourth, a ram; into the fifth, a lamb; and into the sixth, as they did not possess an ox, a tanned

hide from the sanctuary was substituted; the seventh aperture remained gaping and empty.

Before a human victim should be offered, it was well to test the arms of the god. Slender chainlets, passing from the fingers over the shoulders, descended at the back; these men pulled downward, raising to the height of its elbows two open hands that, in approaching each other, closed over its belly. They worked them several times successively with little jerks. Then the musical instruments were dumb, and the fire roared fiercely.

The pontiffs of Moloch walked to and fro on the large stone slab, inspecting the multitude.

The first offering must be an individual sacrifice, an oblation perfectly voluntary, which would include the others along with it. But no one came forward, and the seven alleys leading from the barrier to the Colossus remained completely empty. To stimulate the people, the priests pulled from their girdles little stilettos, with which they slashed their faces. The Devotees, who were stretched on the ground outside, were brought into the enclosure, and a bundle of horrible iron was thrown to them: each one chose his torture. They passed spits through their breasts, slit their cheeks, put upon their heads crowns of thorns; then they enlaced their arms together, and surrounding the children, they formed another great circle which kept contracting and expanding. When they reached the balustrade, they threw themselves back, only to eddy outward again, continually calling the crowd's attention to themselves by the dizziness of their movements, accompanied by blood and cries.

Gradually the people, thus incited, came into the end of the alleys, and threw into the flames, pearls, gold vases, cups, all their treasures, and torches.

These offerings became more and more splendid, and kept multiplying. Presently a man who staggered, a man pale and hideous from terror, thrust forward a child; then a small black mass could be distinguished between the hands of the Colossus—it disappeared into the dark opening, the priests leaning over the edge of the large slab, and a new chant burst out, celebrating the joys of death and of new birth into eternity.



"LORD! EAT!"

The children mounted slowly, and as the smoke rose in lofty, whirling masses, they seemed from afar to disappear in a cloud. Not one faltered. All had been bound hand and foot, and the dark drapery prevented them from seeing anything, and from being recognized.

Hamilcar, in a red mantle, like the priests of Moloch, stood near the Baal, upright before the great toe of its right foot. When the fourteenth child was led forward, all saw that he made a gesture of horror; but quickly resuming his attitude of composure, he crossed his arms, and gazed on the ground. On the other side of the Colossus the grand pontiff likewise remained motionless, bowing his head, upon which was an Assyrian mitre, and watching on his breast the gold plaque covered with prophetic stones, which threw out iridescent lights as the flame struck across them. He grew pale and abstracted.

Hamilcar inclined his head, and they were both so near the funeral pyre that the hem of their robes in rising from time to time swept it.

Moloch's brazen arms moved more rapidly; they no longer paused. Each time a child was placed upon them, the priests of Moloch extended their hands over the victim to lay upon it the sins of the people, vociferating:

"These are not men, but oxen!" and the multitude around repeated, "Oxen! Oxen!" The Devotees screamed out, "Lord! Eat!" and the priests of Proserpine, conforming in terror to Carthage's need, mumbled their Eleusinian formula: "Pour forth rain! conceive!" No sooner were the victims placed on the edge of the aperture than they vanished, like a drop of water on a red-hot plate, and white smoke curled up through the scarlet glow.

Yet the appetite of the god was not appeased: he still wanted more. In order to supply him, the children were piled on his hands, and were held there by a great chain. At first the Devotees tried to count them, in order to see if the total number corresponded to the days of the solar year; but now so many were piled on that it was impossible to distinguish them in the dizzy motion of those horrible arms. All this lasted a long

time, until nightfall. Then the belly of the god began to glow more sombrely. Burning flesh was now visible. Some even fancied that they recognized hair, limbs, and entire bodies.

Night fell; clouds gathered over the head of the Baal. The pyre, now flameless, made a pyramid of glowing embers that reached to his knees; and all crimson, like a giant covered with blood, with head bent backward, he seemed to reel under the weight of his intoxication. As the priests hastened, the frenzy of the people increased; as the number of victims diminished, some cried out to spare them, others that Moloch must have more. It seemed as if the walls, with their masses of spectators, would crumble beneath the shrieks of horror and of mystic ecstasy. True believers entered the alleys, dragging their children, who clung to them; and they beat their little hands to make them loose their hold, that they might deliver them to the red men. Occasionally the musicians stopped from sheer exhaustion; and in the lull could be heard the screams of mothers and the crackling of the grease falling on the coals. The mandrake-drinkers crept on all-fours around the colossus, roaring like tigers. The Yidonim prophesied; the Devotees sang with their cleft lips. The trellis-work was broken, for all wanted to participate in the sacrifice; and fathers whose children were long since dead cast into the yawning furnace their effigies, toys, and preserved bones. Those who possessed knives rushed upon the others; they cut one another's throats in their voracious rage. The sacred slaves, with bronze winnowing-baskets, took the fallen cinders from the edge of the stone slab, tossing them high in the air, that the sacrifice might be dispersed over the entire city, and ascend to the region of the stars.

The tumultuous noise and vast illumination had drawn the Barbarians to the very foot of the walls. Climbing upon the ruins of the *helepolis*, to have a better view, they looked on, gasping with horror.



XIV:

THE PASS OF
THE BATTLE-AXE

THE Carthaginians had scarcely re-entered their houses when clouds began to gather thickly, and those who looked up towards the colossus felt great drops upon their brows—and the rain fell.

All night it rained unceasingly—in floods; the thunder growled; it was the voice of Moloch; he had conquered Tanit; and being now fecundated, she was opening her vast breast from high heaven. Occasionally she was seen in a luminous light extended on pillows of clouds, then the darkness fell again, as though, still too weary, she would sleep once more. The Carthaginians, all believing water to be brought forth by the moon, uttered piercing cries to facilitate her travail.

The rain beat upon the terraces, overflowing everywhere, forming lakes in the courts, cascades over the stairways, and whirlpools at the street corners. It poured down in heavy, warm masses and spouting streams; from the corners of all the buildings gleamed great, foaming jets; against the walls it was like white sheets vaguely suspended, and the roofs of the temples shone brilliantly black under the lightning flashes. By a thousand channels torrents descended from the Acropolis; houses suddenly crumbled; beams, rubbish, and furniture swept by in the streams rushing impetuously over the pavements.

Amphoras, jugs, and canvases were exposed to catch the water; but the torches were extinguished; and to light their ways the people took brands from the pyre of the Baal, and in order to drink they flung back their heads and opened their mouths. Some, by the edges of miry pools, plunged their arms in up to their armpits, and gorged themselves with water which they vomited like buffaloes. Gradually a freshness spread abroad; all breathed the humid air, giving full play to their limbs; and in the happiness of their intoxication boundless hope sprang up. All their miseries were forgotten. Their country was revived anew.

They felt the need of expending upon others the excess of fury which they had been unable to employ against themselves. Such a sacrifice as theirs ought not to be useless—even though they had no remorse, they found themselves carried away by the frenzy that is evoked by complicity in irreparable crimes.

The Barbarians had faced the storm in their poorly closed tents; and the next day, still benumbed, they were floundering about in the deep mud, searching for their munitions and weapons, which were spoiled and lost.

Hamilcar himself went to seek Hanno, and, in pursuance of his full powers, entrusted to him the command. The old Suffete hesitated some minutes between his rancour and his appetite for authority; however, he accepted.

Subsequently Hamilcar sent out a galley, equipped with a catapult on both ends, and anchored her in the gulf, facing the raft. Then on all available vessels he embarked the stoutest of his troops. He was apparently flying; and making sail towards the north, he gradually disappeared in the mist.

But three days later, when the besiegers were about to renew the attack, some people from the Libyan coast arrived in a state of tumult. Barca had fallen upon them. He had levied for provisions on all sides, and he was taking possession of the country.

The Barbarians were as indignant as if he had betrayed them. Those who were most wearied of the siege, and especially the Gauls, did not hesitate to leave the walls in the hope of re-

joining the Suffete. Spendius wanted to reconstruct the *helepolis*. Mâtho had traced an imaginary line from his tent to Megara, and had sworn to follow it; and not one of their men stirred. But Autharitus' soldiers departed, deserting the western portion of the ramparts. Carelessness was now so widespread that no one even thought of replacing them.

Narr' Havas spied them from the distance in the mountains. He moved his troops during the night along the outer side of the Lagoon by the seacoast, and entered Carthage.

He presented himself like a saviour, with six thousand men, all carrying meal beneath their mantles, and bringing forty elephants laden with forage and dried meats. Soon the people flocked around them, giving them names. The arrival of such succour rejoiced the Carthaginians even less than the sight of these strong animals sacred to Baal: it was a pledge of his favour, a proof that at last he came to defend them, and to join in the war.

Narr' Havas received the compliments of the Elders; then he ascended towards Salammbô's palace. He had not seen her since the time when, in Hamilcar's tent, between the five armies, he had felt her little, cold, soft hand bound to his. After the betrothal she had returned to Carthage. His love, diverted by other ambitions, had come back to him, and now he anticipated enjoying his rights by marrying and taking possession of her.

Salammbô did not understand how this young man could ever become her master! Though she prayed nightly to Tanit for the death of Mâtho, her horror of the Libyan was decreasing. She dimly felt that the hatred with which he had persecuted her was something almost religious; and she would gladly have seen in Narr' Havas some reflection of that violence which fascinated her. She yearned to know more of him; nevertheless, his presence would have embarrassed her, and she sent word that she could not receive him.

Besides, Hamilcar had forbidden his people to admit the Numidian king to his daughter; he withheld this reward till the conclusion of the war, hoping thereby to preserve his devotion; and Narr' Havas, fearing Hamilcar, retired.

But he bore himself haughtily toward the Hundred, changing their plans, demanding privileges for his men, and having them appointed to important posts. With wide-open eyes, the Barbarians discerned the Numidians on the towers.

However, the Carthaginians' surprise was even greater when there came sailing into their harbour an old Punic trireme bearing four hundred of their men, who had been taken prisoners during the Sicilian war. In fact, Hamilcar had secretly sent back to the Quirites the crews of the Latin vessels taken before the defection of the Tyrian towns, and Rome, in exchange for this fair dealing, had now returned to him these captives. Rome scorned the overtures of the Mercenaries in Sardinia, refusing even to recognise as subjects the inhabitants of Utica.

Hiero, who ruled at Syracuse, was impressed by this example. In order to preserve his own States, he required a balance of power between the two peoples; hence he was interested in the welfare of the Canaanites, and he declared himself their friend by sending to them twelve hundred head of cattle and fifty-three thousand nebel of wheat.

A deeper reason brought help to Carthage: it was thoroughly realised that, if the Mercenaries triumphed, all the people, from soldiers to scullions, would rise in revolt, and that no government, no household, would be able to resist them.

In the meantime Hamilcar reduced the eastern countries. He drove back the Gauls; and the Barbarians found themselves besieged on every side.

Then he set himself to harass them. He would march up, then depart, continually renewing this manœuvre, until gradually he drew them out from their encampments. Spendius was obliged to follow; and Mâtho, in the end, yielded also.

He did not pass beyond Tunis. He shut himself within its walls. There was wisdom in this obstinacy; for soon they saw Narr' Havas coming through the gate of Khamoûn with his elephants and soldiers. Hamilcar recalled him. But already the other Barbarians were wandering about the provinces in pursuit of the Suffete.

At Clypea he had received three thousand Gauls. He had

horses brought to him from Cyrenaica and suits of armour from Bruttium, and reopened the war.

Never had his genius been so impetuous and fertile. For five months he drew them in his track. He had a goal to which he wished to lead them.

The Barbarians had at first tried to surround him with small detachments, but he always escaped them. They separated no more. Their army now numbered forty thousand men all told, and many times they rejoiced to see the Carthaginians driven back.

That which tormented them most was the cavalry of Narr' Havas. Often in the most oppressive hours of the day as they were crossing the plains, dozing under the weight of their weapons, a great line of dust would suddenly rise on the horizon, horsemen would gallop up, and from out of the depths of a cloud full of flaming eyes, a shower of darts would be launched upon them. The Numidians, in their white mantles, would utter loud yells, lift up their arms, press their knees against their rearing stallions, make them wheel suddenly, and then disappear. Not far away, packed upon dromedaries, they always maintained a reserve of javelins and provisions; and they would return more terrible than ever, howling like wolves, flying like vultures. The Barbarians who were posted at the ends of the lines fell one by one: this would continue till evening, when an endeavour would be made to enter the mountains.

Although they were perilous for the elephants, Hamilcar had marched into them. He followed the long chain which extended from the promontory of Hermæum to the summit of Zagouan. The enemy believed that this was a plan to hide the weakness of his troops. But the continual uncertainty in which he kept them ended by exasperating them more than a defeat. Nevertheless, they were not discouraged, but marched after him.

One evening, behind the Silver Mountain and the Lead Mountain, amid huge rocks, and at the mouth of a defile, they

surprised a corps of velites and thought that certainly the whole Punic army was before them, for they could hear the tramp of feet and bluster of clarions; but the Carthaginians immediately fled through the gorge. This defile sloped down to a plain, formed like an iron axe, environed by high cliffs. To overtake the velites the Barbarians dashed into it; right at the further end other Carthaginians were rushing about tumultuously among galloping oxen. A man in a red mantle could be discerned: it was the Suffete; the pursuers yelled out, transported by an increase of fury and joy. Many of the Barbarians either from laziness or caution had remained at the entrance of the pass; but horsemen, debouching from a wood, with blows of lances and sabres drove them down upon the others, until finally all the Barbarians were below in the plain.

After this vast mass of men had swirled around and back and forth for some time, it halted; no outlet was discovered.

Those who were nearest to the pass turned back, but the passage had in the meantime entirely disappeared. They hailed those in front to make them proceed; the latter crushed themselves against the mountain, and from afar they abused their comrades, who could not find the passage again.

In fact, scarcely had the Barbarians descended, before men lying in ambush behind the rocks had heaved them up with beams and overturned them; and as the slope of the ground was very abrupt, the enormous blocks of rocks, rolling down in confusion, completely choked up the narrow opening.

At the other extremity of the plain extended a long passage, here and there split by crevices, that led to a ravine beyond, rising to the upper plateau, where the Punic army was stationed. In this passage, against the walls of the cliff, scaling-ladders had previously been placed; and, protected by the circuitous turnings of the crevices, the velites, before being overtaken, were able to seize the ladders and mount the walls; nevertheless, many became entangled at the bottom of the ravine, and these were drawn aloft with cables, as the earth in that quarter was covered by quicksand, and rose so steeply that it would be

impossible for any man to crawl up, even on his hands and knees.

Almost immediately the Barbarians reached this spot; but a portcullis, forty cubits high, made to fit exactly in the intervening space, suddenly dropped before them, like a rampart that had fallen from the sky.

Thus the strategic combinations of the Suffete were successfully accomplished. None of the Mercenaries knew the mountain, and, marching at the head of the column, they had thus led the others into the trap. The rocks, a little narrower at the base, were easily knocked over, and whilst they all were running, his army on the horizon had shouted as if in distress. It is true that Hamilcar might have lost all his velites—half of whom only remained; but he would willingly have sacrificed twenty times as many men for the success of such an enterprise.

Until morning the Barbarians marched in compact files, from one end to the other of this circumscribed plain. They tapped the mountain with their hands, seeking some passage; but all to no purpose.

Finally, day broke; they then saw a large, white, perpendicularly hewn wall; and no way of escape, not a hope! The two natural passages from this alley were closed by the portcullis on one side, and by rocks on the other.

They looked at one another without speaking. They collapsed, feeling an icy cold in their loins and an overwhelming weight upon their eyelids.

They leaped up and bounded against the rocks; but those at the base, held down by those above, were immovable. Then they tried to cling to the rocky sides so as to reach the top; but the tun-bellied form of these huge masses refused all hold. They tried to split the earth at the sides of the gorge, but their weapons broke; then, as a last resort, they made a vast fire with their tent-poles, but the mountain would not burn.

Now they went back to the portcullis; it was garnished with long spikes, thick as boar-spears, and sharp as porcupine quills, set closer together than bristles in a brush. But such was their

rage that they flung themselves against it. Those in the first wave were spiked to the very backbone, the second fell backward over one another, and all recoiled, leaving human shreds and blood-stained scalps on the horrible spikes.

When they grew a little calmer in their hopelessness, they examined their provisions. The Mercenaries, whose baggage was lost, possessed but enough for two days, and all the others found themselves absolutely destitute, as they had been waiting for a promised convoy from the southern villages.

Meanwhile, the cattle loosened by the Carthaginians in the gorge to decoy the Barbarians into this trap wandered about: these they killed with their lances; when their stomachs were full, their thoughts were less dismal.

The next day they slaughtered the mules, forty in number; then they scraped the hides, boiled the entrails, and pounded the bones. As yet they did not despair: the army at Tunis would assuredly hear of their position, and come promptly to their rescue.

But on the evening of the fifth day their hunger redoubled: they gnawed the shoulder-belts of their swords and the little sponges edging the bottoms of their helmets.

These forty thousand men were crowded into a kind of hippodrome formed by the mountain; some of them persistently remained before the portcullis, or at the base of the rocks; the rest confusedly covered the plain of the basin. The strong avoided each other, and the timid sought out the brave, who, however, could not save them.

From fear of infection, the bodies of the velites had been quickly buried, and the location of the graves remained no longer distinguishable.

Lying on the ground, the languor of the Barbarians increased. A veteran sometimes passed between their lines; and they shouted curses against the Carthaginians, against Hamilcar, and against Mâtho, although he was innocent of their present disaster. But it seemed to them that the calamity would have been less if he had shared it. Then they moaned; some even wept softly, like little children.

They would go to the captains and implore them to give them something to appease their sufferings. The officers made no reply, or, seized with rage, picked up stones and threw them into their faces.

In truth, many kept carefully hidden in a hole in the ground a reserve of food, possibly only a few handfuls of dates, or a little meal; this they ate stealthily during the night, with their heads cautiously covered by their mantles; those who possessed swords held them drawn, and the more defiant stood upright, with their backs to the mountain.

They accused and threatened their chiefs. But Autharitus was not afraid to show himself; with the indomitable tenacity peculiar to the Barbarians he would inspect the rocks twenty times a day, each time hoping to find them displaced; and, swinging his heavy shoulders, fur-cloaked, he reminded his companions of a bear leaving its cavern in the spring to see if the snow has melted.

Spendius, surrounded by Greeks, hid himself in one of the crevices; and, as he was frightened, he caused a rumour of his death to be noised about.

By this time they were all hideously thin; their skin was mottled with bluish patches. The evening of the ninth day three Iberians died, whereupon their frightened comrades left the immediate vicinity. The bodies were stripped, and the white, naked corpses remained on the sand exposed to the sun.

Then some Garamantes began to prowls about these bodies. They were men accustomed to a life of solitude in the desert, and revered no god. At length the oldest one of the band made a sign, and bending over the corpses, with their knives they cut off strips and devoured them, squatting on their heels. The others looked on, standing aloof. Cries of horror were raised. Yet many of these men were secretly jealous of the cannibals' frightful courage.

In the middle of the night some of them approached the flesh-eaters, and, dissimulating their eagerness, asked for a tiny morsel, only to taste. Some braver ones followed; their number increased; soon a crowd collected. But almost all, feeling

the cold flesh on their teeth, let their hands fall; a few, on the contrary, devoured their portions with delight.

In order to be encouraged by example, they stimulated each other. Those who had at first refused, came to see the Garamantes, and did not leave; their pieces were cooked over the embers on the point of a spear, and salted with the dust; they even contended among themselves as to the best bits. When nothing remained of the three corpses, their eyes roved over the plain to find others.

But did they not possess some Carthaginians—twenty captives taken in the last skirmish—who had been forgotten until now? They disappeared; besides, it was a piece of revenge. Then, as they needs must live, and the taste for such food developed itself, and as they were dying, they killed the water-carriers, the grooms, and all the servants of the Mercenaries. Some were killed every day. A few ate lustily, regained their strength, and were no longer melancholy.

Soon this resource failed them; then their desire turned towards the sick and wounded: since they could not recover, it was as well to deliver them from their agony. Hence, as soon as a man tottered, all cried out that he was lost, and should serve the others. To accelerate their death they employed all manner of schemes. They stole from them the last remnants of their foul portion, or trod upon them as if by accident. The dying, to induce a belief in their strength, tried to lift their arms, or to stand up, or to laugh. Men who had swooned were roused by the cold contact of a notched blade sawing off a limb; and still others were needlessly killed out of ferocity in order to appease the slayers' fury.

On the fourteenth day a warm, heavy mist, such as was common in those regions at the end of winter, settled down upon the army. This change of temperature caused many deaths, and putrefaction developed with frightful speed in the warm humidity retained by the mountain walls. The drizzle, which fell upon the corpses and softened them, soon made of the whole plain one great mass of rottenness. White vapour floated above, stinging the nostrils, penetrating the skin, and troubling

the eyes: and the Barbarians fancied that through the exhalations of the breath they could see the souls of their dead comrades. An immense disgust overwhelmed them. They would have no more of it. They desired to die.

Two days later the air became pure again, and they were seized anew by hunger. It seemed at times that their stomachs were clawed with hooks; then they rolled over in convulsions, stuffing their mouths full of dirt, biting their own arms, and bursting into frantic spasms of laughter.

Yet more, if possible, did their thirst torment them, as they had not a drop of water—for the leathern water-bottles had been completely dry since the ninth day. To delude themselves, they resorted to the trick of applying their tongues to the metal scales of their sword-belts, the ivory hafts, or the steel of their swords, while experienced camel-drivers tightened their bellies with ropes; others sucked a stone; and many drank urine cooled in their brazen helmets.

And they still looked for the army from Tunis! The length of time that it took in coming, according to their conjecture, made its speedy arrival certain. Besides, Mâtho, who was so brave, would not desert them. "He will come to-morrow!" they said to each other. The morrow came and passed.

In the early days they had prayed, made vows, and all sorts of incantations; but now they felt only hatred for their divinities, and in revenge endeavoured not to believe in them.

Men of violent character perished first; the Africans resisted longer than the Gauls. Zarxas, amid the Balearians, remained extended full length, his hair falling over his arms, inert. Spendius had found a plant with broad leaves full of juice, and in order to scare the others declared it to be poisonous; then he fed himself upon it.

They were too weak to stone the ravens that flew about. Sometimes, when a bearded vulture perched on a corpse, and had been tearing at it for a long time, a man would crawl toward it with a javelin between his teeth, lean upon his arm, and, taking a good aim, would throw the weapon. The bird with white plumage, disturbed by the noise, would pause, look all

about in a tranquil manner, like a cormorant on a reef, then would again plunge its hideous yellow beak into its prey; while the man, in despair, would fall flat on his face in the dust. Some discovered chameleons and serpents. But it was the love of life that kept them alive. They concentrated their minds exclusively on this idea—and clung to existence by an effort of will that in itself prolonged it.

The most stoical kept close together, sitting about in the centre of the plain, here and there between the dead; and, wrapped in their mantles, abandoned themselves silently to their sorrow.

Those who had been born in towns recalled the bustling streets full of noise, the taverns, the theatres, the baths, and the barbers' shops, where stories were told: others saw fields at sunset, where yellow grain waved and huge oxen ascended the hills with ploughshares on their necks. Travellers dreamed of cisterns, hunters of their forests, veterans of battles; and in the torpor that benumbed them, their fancies jostled one another with all the power and clarity of dreams. Hallucinations came over them; they sought a gate in the mountain side to escape, and tried to pass through. Others, believing that they were navigating in a storm, gave orders for the handling of a ship; some even recoiled in terror, perceiving in the clouds Punic battalions; others fancied that they were at a feast, and sang songs.

Many in a strange mania repeated the same word, or continually made the same gesture; then, when they raised their heads and looked at one another, sobs suffocated them, on discovering the horrible ravages depicted on their faces. Some had ceased to suffer, and sought to employ the tedious hours by recounting the various perils from which they had miraculously escaped.

Death seemed certain and imminent to all. How often had they not tried to open a passage! As for imploring terms from the conquerors, by what means could they? They did not even know where Hamilcar was.

The wind blew from the direction of the ravine, making the

sand flow continuously over the portcullis in cascades, and the mantles and hair of the Barbarians were completely covered with falling sand, as if the earth were rising and desirous of engulfing them. Nothing moved; each morning the eternal mountain seemed higher. Sometimes flocks of birds flew swiftly overhead, spreading out their wings across the open blue sky, in the freedom of the air: the men closed their eyes to avoid seeing them. They felt at first a buzzing in their ears; their fingernails blackened; their breasts grew cold. They lay upon their sides, and expired without a cry.

On the nineteenth day two thousand Asiatics were dead, and fifteen hundred men from the Archipelago, eight thousand Libyans, the youngest Mercenaries, and whole tribes—in all, twenty thousand soldiers, one half of the army.

Autharitus, who had only fifty Gauls surviving, was about to kill himself, thereby putting an end to it all, when at the summit of the mountain facing him, he thought he saw a man. The great height made him look like a dwarf. However, Autharitus recognized on his left arm a trefoil-shaped shield, and cried out, "A Carthaginian!" In the plain below the portcullis, and under the rocks, all instantly rose to their feet. The soldier marching on the edge of the precipice was eagerly watched by the Barbarians.

Spendius picked up an ox skull, and with two girdles fashioned a diadem, placing it on the horns at the end of a pole, to signify peaceful intentions. The Carthaginian disappeared. They waited a long time.

At last, in the evening, like a stone loosened from the cliff, there suddenly fell from above a sword-belt made of red leather covered with embroidery and three diamond stars; in the centre it bore stamped upon it the seal of the Grand Council—a horse beneath a palm tree. This was Hamilcar's response, the safe conduct that he sent.

They had nothing to fear; any change of fortune brought with it an end to their ills. They were moved to measureless rapture; they embraced and wept. Spendius, Autharitus, Zaxas, four Italians, one Negro, and two Spartans, offered them-

selves as envoys. They were promptly accepted; however, they knew no way by which to gain exit.

In the midst of this dilemma, a crash resounded in the direction of the rocks, and the topmost crag, having swayed on its base, bounded down to the bottom. Although the rocks were immovable from the side of the Barbarians, being tight packed and approachable only by a steep slope, a vigorous push from the other side was enough to make them fall. The Carthaginians shoved against them, and at daybreak they had fallen into the plain, looking like the steps of a gigantic stairway in ruins.

Still the Barbarians could not climb up, so ladders were thrown over. All rushed for these; but the prompt discharge of a catapult drove them back; and only the Ten were taken up.

They marched between Clinabarians, leaning their hands on the cruppers of the horses to support themselves. Now that their first joy was over, they began to feel uneasy. The demands of Hamilcar would be cruel; but Spendius reassured his companions, saying: "It is I who will speak!" And he boasted of the fine words with which he would insure the army's welfare.

Behind all the bushes they encountered sentinels in ambush, who prostrated themselves before the sword-belt which Spendius had flung across his shoulder.

When finally they arrived at the Punic encampment, the crowd pressed about them, and they heard significant whispers and laughter.

The door of a tent opened; Hamilcar was at the back, seated on a bench near a low table, on which shone a naked blade. His captains stood about him. When he saw these men, he started back, then leaned forward to examine them.

The pupils of their eyes were extraordinarily large, and a wide black ring encircled them, extending to the lower part of their ears; their bluish noses projected between their hollow cheeks, furrowed by deep wrinkles; the skin of their bodies, too large for their flabby muscles, was hidden under a coat of slate-coloured dust; their lips were glued against their yellow teeth; they exhaled an infectious odour, they appeared like half-open tombs, living sepulchres.

In the middle of the tent, on a mat, round which the captives were about to sit down, there was a smoking dish of pumpkins. The Barbarians riveted their gaze on it, shivering in every limb, and tears started to their eyes. Nevertheless they restrained themselves.

Hamilcar turned away to speak to someone. Instantly they all rushed upon the dish, throwing themselves flat on the ground, their faces steeped in the grease; noises of deglutition mingled with sobs of delight, which they could not suppress. Rather from astonishment than pity, they were permitted to finish the contents of the bowl. Then, when they again stood up, Hamilcar commanded by a sign that the man who wore the sword-belt should speak. Spendius was frightened and stammered.

Hamilcar, while listening, constantly twirled round one finger a large gold ring, the same which had imprinted the seal of Carthage on the sword-belt; he accidentally let it fall on the ground. Spendius at once stooped down and picked it up: before his master the servile habits of a slave returned to him. The others shuddered indignantly at this contemptible baseness.

But the Greek raised his voice, and recounted the crimes of Hanno, whom he knew to be a foe of Barca. He tried to move Hamilcar's pity with the details of their sufferings, and spoke on for a long time in a rapid, insidious, and violent manner. Toward the end he became forgetful of self, and was carried away by the fervour of his imagination.

Hamilcar replied that he accepted their excuses. Peace, therefore, was about to be concluded, and this time it would be definitive! But he required that ten Mercenaries chosen by himself, without weapons and without tunics, should be delivered to him.

They had not expected such clemency, and Spendius exclaimed: "Yes! twenty, if you will, master!"

"No! ten will suffice," mildly replied Hamilcar.

In order that they could deliberate, they were dismissed from his tent. As soon as they were alone, Autharitus objected to the sacrifice of their companions, and Zarxas said to Spendius:

"Why did you not kill him?—his sword was within your reach!"

"Him!" exclaimed Spendius, and repeated frequently, "Him! him!" as if the thing had been an impossibility, and Hamilcar were a divinity.

So thoroughly were they overcome by their protracted fatigue that they stretched themselves on their backs upon the ground, sorely perplexed as to what course to follow.

Spendius urged them to yield; after some parley they consented, and they returned to the Suffete.

Then the Suffete put his hand in the hands of the ten Barbarians one after another, and pressed their thumbs; afterwards he rubbed his hands on his garment, for their clammy skins had presented to his touch a sensation harsh and soft, that left a slimy, creeping impression.

After a while he said: "You all, then, are the chiefs of the Barbarians, and you have sworn for them?"

"Yes!" they replied.

"Without reservation, from the bottom of your souls, with the intention of fulfilling your promises?"

They assured him that they would return to the others, and fulfill their pledges.

"Very well!" said the Suffete, "according to the agreement between me, Barca, and you, the ambassadors of the Mercenaries, it is you whom I choose, and shall keep!"

Spendius fell fainting on the mat. The Barbarians, as if abandoning him, pressed close together; and there was not a word nor a murmur.

Their comrades who awaited them, when they did not return, believed themselves betrayed. Without doubt the envoys had given themselves up to the Suffete.

They waited two days longer; then, on the morning of the third, their resolution was taken. With ropes, picks, and arrows fitted like rungs of a ladder between strips of canvas, they succeeded in scaling the rocks; and leaving behind them the weaker ones, about three thousand in number, they marched off to rejoin the army at Tunis.

At the top of the gorge spread a prairie, lightly sprinkled with shrubs, the buds of which the Barbarians devoured; then they came upon a field of beans: these also disappeared as if a cloud of locusts had passed. Three hours later they came to a second plateau, bounded by a belt of green hills.

Between the undulations of these hillocks silvery sheaves shone, stacked at regular intervals: the sun so dazzled the Barbarians that they could but confusedly discern under them large, black masses; these sprang up, as if they were rising from the earth. They were lances in towers, on the backs of fearfully armed elephants.

Beside the spears of their breastplates, the pointed ferrules on their tusks, the brazen plates which covered their sides, and the daggers fastened to their knee-caps, they had on the end of their trunks a band of leather, in which was fixed the hilt of a broad cutlass. Starting simultaneously from the bottom of the plain, they advanced from each side in parallel lines.

A nameless terror froze the Barbarians; they did not try to escape. Already they found themselves surrounded.

The elephants entered this mass, and with the spears on their breastplates clove it; the lance-like tusks rolled it back like ploughshares. They cut, they hewed, they hacked with the scythes extending from their trunks; the towers full of fiery darts seemed like moving volcanoes. Nothing could be distinguished but a broad heap, on which were visible white patches of human flesh, grey spots of broken brass, and red splashes of blood. The horrible animals passed through it all, digging out black furrows.

The most furious were led by a Numidian, crowned with a diadem of plumes. He hurled javelins with terrific speed, while at intervals he uttered a long, shrill whistle; the huge beasts, docile as dogs, in the midst of the carnage kept turning an eye in his direction.

Their circle gradually narrowed. The weakened Barbarians could make no resistance: soon the elephants reached the centre of the plain. There was not room enough, and the animals crowded together, half rearing up, and clashed their tusks.

Suddenly Narr' Havas quieted them, and turning round they trotted back towards the hills.

Meanwhile two syntagmas, taking refuge at the right in a hollow, had thrown down their weapons, and were now upon their knees: turning toward the Punic tents, with uplifted arms, they implored mercy.

Their arms and legs were tied; then, when they were flat on the ground, close together, the elephants were led over them.

Their breast-bones cracked like coffers being broken; the huge animals at each step crushed two men; their cumbrous feet sank into the bodies with a movement of their haunches, that made them appear lame. They continued to the very end.

Movement ceased upon the level of the plain; night fell. Hamilcar was exulting before the spectacle of his vengeance, when suddenly he started.

He saw, and all saw, six hundred paces distant, on the left at the summit of a peak, more Barbarians! In fact, four hundred of the stoutest Mercenaries, Etruscans, Libyans, and Spartans, early in the fray had gained the heights, and until now had been uncertain what to do. After the massacre of their comrades, they resolved to cut through the Carthaginians; already they were descending in close columns in a marvellous and formidable fashion.

A herald was instantly dispatched by the Suffete, stating that he required soldiers, and would receive them unconditionally, so much did he admire their bravery. They could even, added the man of Carthage, come a little nearer to a certain spot, which he pointed out, and where they would find provisions.

The Barbarians ran thither and passed the night in eating; then the Carthaginians burst into murmurs against the partiality of the Suffete for the Mercenaries.

Did he yield to the promptings of an insatiable hatred, or was it possibly a refinement of treachery?

The day after he came himself, unarmed, bareheaded, with an escort of Clinabarians, and declared to the Barbarians that, having more men than he could afford to feed, his intention

was not to keep them. However, as he required good soldiers, and knew not by what method to choose the best, they must fight among themselves till death, and he would admit the victors to his own body-guard. Such a mode of death was preferable to any other. Then he parted his troops—for the Punic standards hid the horizon from the Mercenaries—and showed them Narr' Havas's one hundred and ninety-two elephants, forming a single straight line, and brandishing cutlasses with their uplifted trunks, like giant arms holding axes over their heads.

The Barbarians looked at each other silently. It was not the fear of death that made them pale, but the horrible compulsion to which they found themselves reduced.

The community of their hazardous life had established between these men profound friendships. For the most part the camp took the place of country; and living without families, they transferred to a comrade their instincts of tenderness, and they slept side by side under the same mantle, beneath the star-light. During their perpetual wandering through all kinds of countries, massacres, and adventures, they had formed strange attachments, obscene unions that were as serious as marriage, in which the stronger aided the younger in battle, helped him to scale cliffs, sponged the feverish sweat from his brow, and stole food for him; while the other, who had been a child picked up at the roadside, and then become a Mercenary, paid for this devotion by a thousand delicate attentions and wifely compliances.

They exchanged their necklaces and earrings, gifts they had formerly bestowed upon each other after some great peril, in hours of intoxication. All begged to die, but no one would strike a blow. Here and there a youth said to another man, whose beard was grey: "No! no! you are more robust! You will revenge us! Kill me!" And the elder answered: "I have fewer years to live! Strike to the heart, and think no more about it!" Brothers gazed on each other, with hands clasped; friend uttered to friend eternal farewells, standing upright, weeping on one another's shoulders.

They took off their breastplates, that the sword points might bury themselves more quickly, revealing the scars of terrific blows received for Carthage, that resembled historic inscriptions on columns.

Placing themselves in four rows, in the fashion of gladiators, they began by timid engagements; some even bandaged their eyes, moving their swords gently, like the sticks of the blind. The Carthaginians yelled, crying out that they were cowards. The Barbarians grew excited, and soon the conflict became general, headlong and terrible.

Sometimes two men stopped, covered with blood, fell into each other's arms, and expired kissing. Not one recoiled. They rushed determinedly upon the extended blades. Their delirium became so furious that the Carthaginians, even at a distance, were afraid.

At length they stopped. A loud, hoarse noise came from their chests; and their eyeballs could be seen amidst their long hair, which hung down as if they had emerged from a bath of purple dye. Some turned rapidly round and round, like panthers wounded in the forehead. Others stood motionless, regarding a corpse at their feet; then suddenly they tore their faces with their finger-nails, seized their swords with both hands, and buried them in their own bodies. Sixty yet remained. They asked for a drink. They were bidden to throw down their swords; when they had done so, water was brought to them.

While they were drinking, their faces buried in the vessels, sixty Carthaginians leaped upon them, and stabbed them with stilettos in the back.

Hamilcar had permitted this, to gratify the instincts of his troops, and by this treason to attach them to him personally.

Thus was the war ended, or so at least he believed. Mâtho would certainly not resist, and, in his impatience, the Suffete gave orders for immediate departure.

His scouts came to inform him that a convoy had been observed, going towards the Lead Mountain. Hamilcar did not care—for, once the Mercenaries were annihilated, the Nomads

would make no trouble. The important thing was to take Tunis; so by forced marches he advanced towards it.

He had sent Narr' Havas back to Carthage, to carry the news of his victory. And the king of the Numidians, proud of his success, presented himself at Salammbô's palace.

Salammbô received him in her gardens, under a large sycamore tree, sitting between pillows of yellow leather, with Taanach beside her. Her face was covered with a white scarf, that passed over her mouth and forehead, allowing only her eyes to be seen: but through the transparency of the tissue, her lips shone like the gems on her fingers—for Salammbô kept both hands likewise covered, and all the time they conversed never made a gesture.

Narr' Havas announced to her the defeat of the Barbarians. She thanked him, with a blessing, for the services he had rendered to her father. Then he recounted the whole campaign.

The doves in the palms around them cooed softly, and other birds, such as the ringed galeoles, quails from Tartessus, and Punic guinea-fowls, fluttered in the grass. The gardens, uncultivated for so long a time, were thick with verdure; the colocynth sprang up through the branches of the cassia trees; the dragon-wort sprinkled the rose-fields; all species of vegetation formed tangled bowers, and the sun's rays, descending slantingly, outlined here and there upon the ground, as in a wood, the shadow of a leaf.

The domestic animals, having grown wild, bounded away at the slightest noise. Sometimes a gazelle might be seen dragging with its little black hoofs trailing peacocks' feathers. The noise of the distant town was lost in the murmur of the waves. The sky was perfectly blue, and not a sail appeared on the sea.

Narr' Havas ceased speaking. Without responding, Salammbô looked at him. He wore a linen robe upon which flowers were painted, with a golden fringe at the hem; two silver arrows held back his hair, braided close against his ears. His

right hand rested on the wooden shaft of a pike ornamented with bands of electrum and tufts of hair.

As she looked at him a host of thoughts absorbed her. This young man, with a sweet voice and feminine figure, captivated her eyes by the grace of his fine person, and he seemed like an elder sister sent by the Baals to protect her. The memory of Mâtho seized her, nor did she resist the desire to inquire what had become of him.

Narr' Havas responded that the Carthaginians were advancing on Tunis to capture him. While he explained their chances of success and Mâtho's weakness, she appeared to rejoice with an extraordinary hope; her lips quivered, her breast panted. When at last he vowed to kill Mâtho himself, she cried out:

"Yes! Kill him! You must!"

The Numidian replied that he ardently desired his death, inasmuch as when the war was over he should marry her.

Salammbô trembled, and bent her head.

But Narr' Havas went on to compare his love and his desires to flowers that languished for rain; to travellers lost in the night awaiting the dawn. He told her that she was more beautiful than the moon; dearer than the morning breezes, or than the face of a guest. He would have rare objects, not to be found in Carthage, brought for her from the country of the Blacks, and the apartments of their house should be sprinkled with gold dust.

Evening fell. The scent of balsam filled the air. For a long time they looked at one another in silence, and Salammbô's eyes, deep in her long, flaming draperies, seemed to be twin stars in the rift of a cloud. Before sunset, he retired.

The Elders felt relieved from a vast anxiety when he left Carthage; the people had received him with even more enthusiastic acclamations than upon the former occasion. If Hamilcar and the Numidian king triumphed alone over the Mercenaries, it would be impossible to resist them. Then they resolved to weaken Barca, by making old Hanno, the one whom they loved, participate in the deliverance of Carthage.

Hanno went immediately toward the western provinces, so as to revenge himself in the same regions which had witnessed his shame: but the inhabitants, as well as the Barbarians, were dead, hidden, or fled. Then his wrath poured itself forth upon the country; he burned the ruins of ruins, leaving not a solitary tree, not a spear of grass: the children and the infirm whom they met with were tortured; he gave the women to the soldiers, to violate before slaying them, having the most beautiful always thrown into his own litter—for this atrocious malady inflamed his desires, and he would gloat over his victims with all the passion of a madman.

Often, on the crest of the hills, black tents sank down, as if overthrown by the wind, and broad discs with shining edges, which were recognised as the wheels of chariots, revolved with a plaintive sound as they gradually disappeared in the valleys.

The tribes which had abandoned the siege of Carthage were thus wandering through the provinces, waiting for an opportunity or for some victory of the Barbarians, to return. But from terror, or because of famine, they all followed the roads leading to their own countries, and disappeared.

Hamilcar was not jealous of Hanno's successes, nevertheless he hastened to end matters, ordering him to fall back on Tunis; and Hanno, who loved his country, was under the walls of that town upon the appointed day.

Tunis had for her defence her native population, twelve thousand Mercenaries, and all the Eaters-of-Unclean-Things. They, like Mâtho, had their eyes riveted on the horizon of Carthage, and the populace, as well as the *Schalischim*, beheld her lofty walls from afar, dreaming of the infinite joys behind them. With this unity of hatred, resistance was quickly organised. Leather bottles were used to make helmets, all the palms in the gardens were cut down to furnish lances, cisterns were excavated; and as for food, they fished along the lake shore, catching large white fish which fed on the corpses and filth.

Their ramparts, kept in ruins by the jealousy of Carthage, were so weak that they could be thrown down with a push of

the shoulder. Mâtho ordered the breaches to be filled up with stones from houses. This was the final struggle; he hoped for nothing, yet he reminded himself that Fortune was fickle.

As the Carthaginians drew near, they noticed a man on the rampart, who was visible above the battlements from his waist upwards. The arrows flying about him seemed to frighten him no more than a flight of swallows. Most extraordinarily, not one of them touched him.

Hamilcar pitched his camp on the southern side; Narr' Havas on his right occupied the plain of Rhades; Hanno was stationed on the lake shore; and the three generals were to retain their respective positions so that all should attack the walls simultaneously.

But, first of all Hamilcar wished to show the Mercenaries that he would punish them like slaves; so he had the ten Barbarian ambassadors crucified close together on a hillock facing the city.

At this sight the besieged abandoned the ramparts.

Mâtho had believed that if he could pass between the walls and Narr' Havas's tents so rapidly that the Numidians would not have time to sally forth, he could fall on the rear of the Carthaginian infantry, who would thus be caught between his division and the troops within the town. He sallied forth with his veterans.

Narr' Havas saw him; he crossed the lake shore, and went to warn Hanno to despatch his men to Hamilcar's aid. Did he think Barca too weak to resist the Mercenaries? Was this treachery or folly? No one ever knew.

Hanno, desiring to humiliate his rival, did not hesitate; he ordered the trumpets to be sounded, and all his troops rushed upon the Barbarians. The latter wheeled round and charged straight upon the Carthaginians; they overthrew them, trampled them under foot, and driving them back, reached the tent of Hanno, who then was surrounded by thirty Carthaginians, the most illustrious of the Elders.

Hanno appeared stupefied by their audacity; he called for

his captains; the attackers reached forward to seize him by the throat, shouting abuse. The crowd jostled one another, and those who had their hands on him could scarcely hold him. However, he tried to whisper in their ears: "I will give you all you want! I am rich! Save me!"

They dragged him away, and, heavy as he was, his feet did not touch the ground. They also dragged off the Elders. His terror increased.

"You have defeated me! I am your captive! I will ransom myself! Listen to me, my friends!" and, carried along by their shoulders pressed against his sides, he repeated: "What are you going to do? What do you want? You can see that I don't resist! I have always been complaisant!"

A gigantic cross stood at the gate; the Barbarians howled out, "Here! here!" Then he raised his voice higher, and in the name of their gods he entreated them to take him to their *Schalischim*, because he had something to confide to him, upon which their safety depended.

They paused, some declaring it would be wise to call Mâtho; and he was sent for.

Hanno sank down upon the grass, and he saw around him still more crosses, as if the torture under which he was about to perish had multiplied itself. He tried to believe that he was deluded, that there was only one cross, and even that there was none at all. Finally he felt himself being lifted up.

"Speak!" said Mâtho.

He offered to deliver over Hamilcar: then they would enter Carthage, and both be kings.

Mâtho turned away, signalling to the others to make haste; he thought this was a stratagem to gain time.

The Barbarian was mistaken, for Hanno was in one of those dire extremities where a man no longer considers anything but self-preservation. Besides, he hated Hamilcar so thoroughly, that for the slightest reason he would have sacrificed him and all his soldiers.

At the foot of thirty crosses the Elders languished upon the

ground; already ropes had been passed under their armpits. Then the old Suffete, realising that he was to be put to death, wept bitterly.

His captors pulled off what remained of his clothing, revealing the horrors of his person. Ulcers covered this indescribable mass; the fat of his legs hid his toe-nails; the flesh hung like green rags to his fingers; the tears which ran between the tubercles of his cheeks made his visage shockingly deplorable, for they seemed to occupy more space than on any other human face. His royal bandeau, half untied, trailed with his long white hair in the dust.

Believing that the ropes were not sufficiently strong to haul him up to the top of the cross, they nailed him to it before it was erected, in the Punic fashion. But his pride was aroused in his pain; he began to overwhelm them with abuse. He frothed and writhed like a marine monster stranded and killed on the shore. He predicted that they should all end even more horribly than he, and that he should be revenged.

He was right: for on the other side of the town, whence jets of flames now mingled with columns of smoke, the ambassadors of the Mercenaries were in the agonies of death.

Some who had fainted at first, were revived by the coolness of the breeze; but they remained with their chins on their breasts, their bodies fallen a little, in spite of the nails through their arms, which were fastened above their heads. From their hands and heels blood slowly fell in big drops, like ripe fruit falling from the branches of a tree; and Carthage, the gulf, the mountains, and the plains, appeared to them to be all revolving like an immense wheel; sometimes a cloud of dust swirled up from the earth, and enveloped them in its eddies. They were consumed by a horrible thirst; their tongues curled up in their mouths, and they felt an icy sweat trickling over them with their departing souls.

Meanwhile, they could see far below them, streets, soldiers marching, swords swinging; and the tumult of battle came indistinctly to them, as the noise of the sea to shipwrecked sailors dying in the rigging of their ships. The Italiots, more robust

than the rest, continued to shriek; the Lacedæmonians kept silent, with eyes closed; Zarxas, formerly so vigorous, drooped like a broken reed; the Ethiopian alongside of him had his head thrown backward over the arm of the cross; Autharitus, motionless, rolled his eyes; his heavy, long hair was caught in a crack in the wood and drawn straight over his forehead, and his death-rattle seemed rather like a growl of wrath.

As for Spendius, a strange courage had come to him; he despised life now, because of the certainty that he should have an almost immediate and eternal release; he awaited death with impassibility.

In the midst of their swoonings, they sometimes shuddered at the touch of feathers grazing their lips. Huge wings cast long, waving shadows over them, croakings sounded in the air; and as the cross of Spendius was the highest, it was thereon that the first vulture alighted. Then he turned his face towards Autharitus, saying slowly, with a strange smile: "Do you recall the lions on the road to Sicca?"

"They were our brothers!" answered the Gaul, as he expired.

The Suffete in the meantime had broken through the walls and gained the citadel. Under a gust of wind the smoke suddenly disappeared, disclosing the horizon as far as the walls of Carthage; he even thought that he could distinguish the people watching from the platform of Eschmoûn; then he turned his eyes, and perceived to the left, on the lake shore, thirty immense crosses.

To make these crosses still more frightful, the Barbarians had constructed them out of tent-poles, lashed end to end; so that the thirty bodies of the crucified Elders appeared high against the sky. On their bosoms, like white butterflies, gleamed the feathers of the arrows which had been shot at them from below.

On the summit of the highest shone a broad, gold fillet; it hung upon the shoulder of the crucified one, for the arm on that side was wanting; and Hamilcar with difficulty recognised Hanno. His spongy bones giving way under the iron nails, por-

tions of his limbs had become detached, and there remained on the cross only shapeless fragments, like portions of animals hung upon a hunter's door.

The Suffete did not understand what it all meant: the town in front of him concealed all that lay beyond at the back; and the captains sent successively to the two generals had not returned. Then the fugitives came, recounting the rout; and the Punic army halted. This catastrophe coming in the midst of their victory, stupefied them. They no longer heeded Hamilcar's orders. Mâtho profited by this to continue his ravages upon the Numidians.

Hanno's camp having been overthrown, he had again turned on Narr' Havas's forces. The elephants charged; but the Mercenaries, shaking firebrands snatched from the burning wall, advanced on the plain; the huge animals were frightened, and fled, dashing into the gulf, killing one another in their struggles, or drowning under the weight of their breastplates. Already Narr' Havas had ordered his cavalry to charge; the Mercenaries threw themselves face downward on the ground, then, when the horses were within three steps of them, they sprang under their bellies and ripped them open with daggers; half of the Numidians had thus perished when Barca came up.

The Mercenaries, now exhausted, could not hold out against his troops. They retreated in good order as far as the Hot-Springs Mountain. The Suffete had the prudence not to follow them. He moved toward the mouth of the Macar.

Tunis was his; but the city was now nothing but a heap of smoking rubbish. The ruins had tumbled down through the breaches in the walls out into the plain; beyond, between the shores of the gulf, the elephants' carcasses, driven by the wind, collided, like an archipelago of black rocks floating on the water.

Narr' Havas, in order to sustain this war, had exhausted his forests, taking alike young and old, male and female elephants, and the military strength of his kingdom could not be reënfined. The people, who saw these animals perish from afar, were in despair; many lamented in the streets, calling them by

their names, as if deceased friends: "Ah! Invincible! Victor! Thunderbolt! Swallow!" And during the first day they spoke of them even more than of the dead citizens. The next day, seeing the Mercenaries' tents pitched on the Hot-Springs Mountain, their despair became so deep that many of the people, especially the women, flung themselves headlong from the summit of the Acropolis.

None knew of Hamilcar's designs; he lived alone in his tent, with no one near him but a young boy, never admitting anyone, not even Narr' Havas, to eat with them. Nevertheless, he showed him much deference since Hanno's defeat; and the king of the Numidians was too interested in becoming his son to be distrustful.

This inaction veiled crafty plans. By all sorts of artifices Hamilcar won over the chiefs of villages; and the Mercenaries were hunted, repulsed, and tracked like wild beasts. As soon as they entered a wood, the trees were fired about them, the waters of the springs they drank from were poisoned; they were walled up in caverns wherein they had taken refuge to sleep. People who had formerly protected them, even their recent accomplices, now pursued them; they could always recognise Carthaginian armour among these bands.

Many of the Mercenaries' faces were consumed with red-tetter; this they thought had attacked them from touching Hanno. Others imagined it was because they had eaten the fish of Salammbô; and, far from repenting, they dreamed of yet more abominable sacrileges, that the humiliation of the Punic gods might be yet greater. They would have liked to exterminate them.

Thus, for three months, they lingered wearily along the eastern coast, from behind the mountain of Selloum, and as far as the first sands of the desert, seeking a place of refuge, no matter where. Utica and Hippo-Zarytus alone had not betrayed them; but alas, Hamilcar surrounded both of these cities. Then they went to the north at hazard, without know-

ing the roads. Their continued sufferings were beginning to affect their brains.

Only their feeling of anger remained, and this steadily increased. One day they found themselves again in the gorges of Cobus, once more before Carthage!

Skirmishes grew more frequent. Fortune favored neither side; both armies were so worn out that they would have preferred, instead of skirmishing, to engage in a great pitched battle, provided that it were certainly the last.

Mâtho wished to carry the challenge himself to the Suffete. However, one of his Libyans devoted himself to the mission. At his departure all were firmly convinced that he would never return to them.

He returned the same evening.

Hamilcar accepted the challenge. They would meet the next day at sunrise, on the plain of Rhades.

The Mercenaries wanted to know if he had said anything more, and the Libyan added: "As I stood before him, he asked me why I waited. I answered,—'To be killed!' Then he replied:—'No! go now; that shall be to-morrow, with the rest.'"

This generosity astonished the Barbarians; some were terrified at it, and Mâtho regretted that the envoy had not been killed.

Mâtho's army still contained three thousand Africans, twelve hundred Greeks, fifteen hundred Campanians, two hundred Iberians, four hundred Etruscans, five hundred Samnites, forty Gauls, and a band of Naffurs—nomad bandits met with in the date region: all told, seven thousand, two hundred and nineteen soldiers; but not one complete syntagma. They stopped up the holes in their breastplates with the shoulder-blades of animals, and they replaced their brass cothurns with ragged sandals. Copper or iron plates weighed down their garments; their coats-of-mail hung in tatters about them, revealing scars that seemed like purple threads, between the hairs on their arms and faces.

Anger at the thought of their slain comrades flooded their minds again, and increased their energy. They felt confusedly that they were the ministers of a god who dwelt in the hearts of the oppressed, the pontiffs of a universal vengeance! Then, too, they were enraged by the hurt of a supreme injustice, and especially by the sight of Carthage on the horizon. They swore the most solemn oaths to fight for one another to the death.

They slaughtered the beasts of burden, eating as much as possible in order to gain strength; afterwards they slept. Some prayed, turning toward different constellations.

The Carthaginians arrived first on the battlefield. They rubbed the faces of their shields with oil, to make the arrows glance off more easily; the foot-soldiers who had long hair prudently cut it off close over the forehead; and Hamilcar, as early as the fifth hour, ordered his men to overturn all the bowls, knowing the disadvantage of entering a battle with too full stomachs. His army consisted of fourteen thousand men, about double the entire number of the Barbarians. Still he had never been more anxious: if he succumbed, it would certainly be the annihilation of the Republic, and he would perish on the cross; if he triumphed, on the contrary, he would conquer Italy by the Pyrenees, Gaul, and the Alps, and the empire of the Barcas would become eternal. Twenty times during the night he arose to inspect everything personally, even to the most minute details. As for the Carthaginians, they were exasperated by their prolonged terror.

Narr' Havas doubted the fidelity of his Numidians; furthermore, the Barbarians might conquer them; a strange weakness possessed him, and he constantly drank large cups of water.

A man whom he did not know opened his tent and placed on the ground a crown of rock salt, ornamented with hieratic designs made in sulphur and lozenges of mother-of-pearl. Sometimes a marriage-crown was sent to a betrothed husband as a proof of love, or a kind of invitation.

Nevertheless, Hamilcar's daughter had no affection for Narr' Havas. The memory of Mâtho embarrassed her in an intolerable way; it seemed to her that the death of this man could

alone clear her thoughts: as a viper's bite is cured by crushing the viper on the wound. The king of the Numidians was subject to her will. He waited impatiently for his wedding, and as it was to follow the victory, Salammbô had sent him this present in order to inspire his courage. Then his distress disappeared, and he thought only of the happiness of possessing so beautiful a woman.

The same vision had assailed Mâtho; but he rejected it at once; and his suppressed love was expended on his comrades-in-arms. He cherished them as he would a part of his own person—aye, of his hate—and he felt his spirit loftier, his arm more powerful. He now knew clearly what he had to do. If an occasional sigh escaped him, it was because he recalled the fate of Spendius.

He ranged the Barbarians in six equal ranks, stationing the Etruscans in the centre, all fastened to one bronze chain; the archers were kept in the rear, and on the wings he distributed the Naffurs, mounted on short-haired camels covered with ostrich plumes.

The Suffete arranged his soldiers in similar order; outside of the infantry, beside the velites, he placed the Clinabarians, and beyond them the Numidians. When day appeared, the two armies were thus drawn up in line of battle, face to face. From afar they stared at one another with large, wild eyes. At first there was some hesitation; at length the two armies began to move.

The Barbarians advanced slowly, to avoid getting out of breath, beating the ground with their feet. The centre of the Punic army formed a convex curve. Then came a terrible shock, like the crash of two colliding fleets. The first rank of the Barbarians opened quickly, and the archers, sheltered in the rear, hurled their balls, arrows, and javelins. Meanwhile, the curve of the Punic army gradually straightened: it became a straight line, then curved inwards; next, the two sections of velites approached each other in parallel lines like the branches of closing compasses.

The Barbarians, charging the phalanx furiously, entered the

breach: they were overreaching themselves. Mâtho halted them, and whilst the Carthaginian wings continued to advance he commanded the three rear ranks of his army to spread out; soon they over-lapped his flanks; his army then appeared in a long line of three ranks.

But the Barbarians placed at the extremities were the weakest, especially those on the left, who had exhausted their quivers; and the troop of velites, which had at last come up against them, slaughtered them freely.

Mâtho ordered them back. His right wing contained the Campanians, armed with battle-axes; these he pushed against the left of the Carthaginians; the centre forces attacked the enemy, and those on the other extremity, out of danger, kept the velites at bay.

Then Hamilcar divided his cavalry into squadrons, set the hoplites between them, and let them charge the Mercenaries.

These conical masses presented a front of horses, and their broader sides bristled with lances. It was impossible for the Barbarians to resist, for only the Greek foot-soldiers were equipped with brazen armour, all the rest being merely armed with cutlasses on the end of poles, scythes taken from farm-houses, and swords made from the felloes of wheels; the blades, too soft, bent at a blow, and while they were straightening them under their heels, the Carthaginians easily massacred them right and left.

But the Etruscans, riveted to their chain, did not swerve. Those who were slain, unable to fall, made a barrier with their corpses; and this vast line of bronze alternately spread out and closed in, supple as a serpent, and as impregnable as a wall. The Barbarians came behind it to re-form, took breath for a minute, and rushed on again, with their shattered weapons in their hands.

Many were already weaponless, and they sprang upon the Carthaginians, biting at their faces like mad dogs. Proudly the Gauls stripped off their tunics, showing from afar their fine, large, white bodies, and endeavoured to terrify the enemy by enlarging their wounds. In the midst of the Punic syntagma,

the voice of the crier repeating the orders was no longer heard. The standards above the dust repeated their signals, and everyone was swept along, impelled by the movement of the vast mass surrounding him.

Hamilcar commanded the Numidians to advance, but the Naffurs flung themselves forward to meet the encounter. These men, habited in ample black robes, with a tuft of hair on the top of their heads, carrying rhinoceros-leather shields, wielded a haftless blade at the end of a rope; and their camels, plastered with feathers, uttered long, loud, gurgling plaints. Their blades fell with precision, and then were lifted up with a sharp stroke, always carrying off a limb. The fierce camels galloped through the syntagma; those with broken legs hopping awkwardly, like wounded ostriches.

As a single mass the Punic infantry fell again on the Barbarians, and broke their line. Their maniples wheeled, separating, spreading out. The more glittering Carthaginian weapons encircled them like crowns of gold; the centre was a swarming hive; the sun shone down on them, tipping the sword-points with white, dancing gleams. Files of the slain Clinabarians lay stretched on the plain; the Mercenaries stripped off their armour and put it on themselves; then they returned to the combat. The Carthaginians, deceived by this ruse, found themselves more than once surrounded by their enemies. Stupefaction froze them in their tracks, or else they fell back and the triumphant cheers which arose from a distance seemed to drive them like derelicts in a storm. Hamilcar was in despair, for it seemed that all was to be overcome by the genius of Mâtho and the invincible courage of the Mercenaries!

But a great noise of tambours sounded from the horizon. It was a crowd of old men, invalids, youths of fifteen, and even women, who, no longer able to restrain their anxiety, had left Carthage. In order to assure themselves of formidable protection, they had taken out of Hamilcar's park the only elephant left to the Republic—the one whose trunk had been cut off.

Then it seemed to the Carthaginians that their country, abandoning her walls, came to command them to die valiantly

for her. Redoubled fury seized them, and the Numidians led on all the others.

In the middle of the plain the Barbarians were standing with their backs to a hillock. They had no chance of success, nor even of surviving; but they were the best, the most intrepid, and the strongest.

The people of Carthage began to throw, over the Numidians' heads, spits, larding-pins, and hammers; and those who had made consuls tremble died beneath sticks thrown by women: the Punic populace was exterminating the Mercenaries.

The Barbarians took refuge on the top of the hill: their circle at every fresh breach closed in. Twice they descended, but at each encounter were repulsed, and the Carthaginians, pell-mell, extended their arms, and reached out their spears between their comrades' legs, thrusting forward at random. They slipped in the blood, and corpses rolled down the steep hill-side. The elephant, in trying to climb the beleaguered mount, trod upon them up to his belly, and seemed to spread and crush them with delight. The large end of his amputated trunk from time to time was lifted up like an enormous blood-sucker.

All halted. The Carthaginians ground their teeth as they contemplated the top of the hill, where the Barbarians held their position, still standing firmly.

Finally they rallied, and charged abruptly: the fray began again. Often the Mercenaries allowed the enemy to draw near, crying out that they would surrender, then with a horrible laugh they killed themselves with a single blow; and as the dead fell, others jumped on them to defend themselves. The hill became a pyramid that gradually grew higher.

Soon only fifty Barbarians were left, then twenty, then but three, then two only survived—a Samnite armed with an axe, and Mâtho, who still had his sword.

The Samnite, bent on his haunches, swung his axe from right to left, constantly warning Mâtho of blows directed at him: "Master! this way! that way! stoop down!"

Mâtho had lost his shoulder-pieces, helmet, and breastplate; he was completely naked, and more livid than the dead; his

hair stood straight up, the corners of his mouth were covered with froth, and his sword whirled with such speed that it made an aureole about him. A stone shattered it close to the guard; the Samnite was killed; the mass of Carthaginians closed in; they were touching him. Then he raised his empty hands toward the sky, closed his eyes, and with arms thrown wide open, like a man about to leap from the height of a promontory into the sea, he hurled himself into the midst of the lances.

The foe scattered before him. Time and again he rushed against the Carthaginians; but they always recoiled, turning aside their weapons.

Mâtho's foot struck against a sword, and as he bent to seize it, he felt himself caught by the wrists and knees; and he fell.

Narr' Havas had followed him for some time, step by step, with a large net used for trapping wild beasts, and taking advantage of the moment when Mâtho leaned down, he ensnared him in it.

The prisoner was then fastened on the elephant's back, his four limbs cross-wise, and all those who were not wounded escorted him, hurrying with great tumult towards Carthage.

The news of this victory had already preceded them—an inexplicable thing—as early as the third hour of the night, and the water-clock of Khamoûn marked the fifth hour as they reached Malqua. Then Mâtho reopened his eyes; there were so many lights in the houses that the town appeared to be in flames.

An immense clamour came dimly to him, and lying on his back he gazed at the stars.

Then a door closed, and darkness enveloped him.

The following day, at the same hour, the last of the men who had remained in the Pass of the Battle-Axe expired.

The day that their comrades had departed, some Zuæces who were returning home had rolled away the rocks, and had supplied them with food for some time.

The Barbarians had persisted in believing that Mâtho would appear—and they refused to leave the mountain, from



HE HURLED HIMSELF INTO THE MIDST OF THE LANCES

dejection, from weakness, and that obstinacy of sick men who refuse to stir. At length the provisions were exhausted, and the Zuæces went away. It was known that the survivors numbered barely thirteen hundred, and that there was no need to employ soldiers to make an end of them.

Wild beasts, especially lions, had greatly multiplied during the three years of the war. Narr' Havas made an extensive bush-beat, then, chasing them after having baited them by tethering goats at regular distances, he had drawn them into the Pass of the Battle-Axe; and all these animals were still living there when the man arrived who had been sent by the Elders to find out what was left of the Barbarians.

Over the plain lions and corpses were mingled with clothing and armour. From almost every body either a face or an arm was missing. A few seemed still intact; others were completely dried up, and the dusty skulls filled the helmets; fleshless feet stuck straight out of the graves; skeletons still wore their mantles; bones bleached by the sun made shining patches on the sand.

The lions were taking their ease with their chests against the ground, their two fore-paws stretched out, blinking their eyes in the glare of daylight, which was intensified by its reflection from the white rocks. Others, sitting on their haunches, stared fixedly before them, or, half lost in their profuse manes, slept, rolled up like balls. All appeared to be satiated, weary and lethargic. They were as motionless as the mountain, or as the dead. Night was falling; wide red bands streaked the western sky.

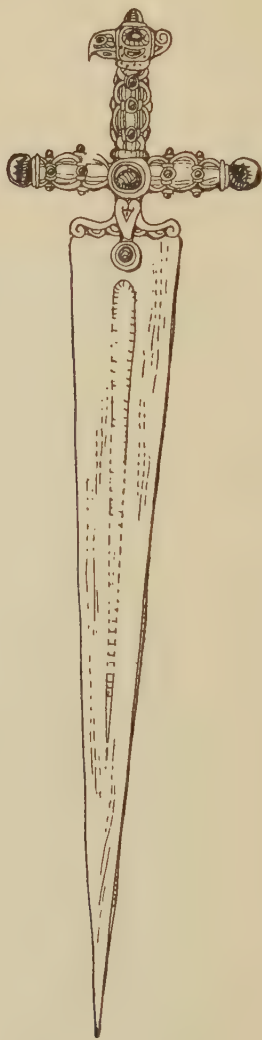
In one of the heaps irregularly embossing the plain, something more weird than a spectre arose; then one of the lions began to move, his monstrous form cutting a black shadow on the background of the purple sky. When he got near to the man he felled him with a single blow of his paw. Then, stretched flat on his belly, he slowly drew out the entrails.

Afterwards he opened his jaws wide, and for some minutes uttered a long, deep roar, which reëchoed in the mountains, and was finally lost in the solitude.

All at once gravel rolled from above; then came the pat-

tering of rapid steps, and from the side of the portcullis and from the gorge appeared pointed snouts and straight ears, with yellow gleaming eyeballs. These were the jackals, coming to devour the remains.

The Carthaginian who leaned over the edge of the precipice returned to Carthage.



XV:

M Â T H O



IN CARTHAGE there was joy—a deep, universal, uncontrolled, frantic joy. The statues of the gods had been repainted, the holes in the ruins repaired, and the streets strewn with branches of myrtle; at the corners of the streets incense burned; and the multitude, crowding on the terraces in their motley apparel, resembled masses of flowers blooming in the air.

The continual din of voices was dominated by the cry of the water-carriers as they sprinkled the pavements. Hamilcar's slaves, in his name, distributed roasted barley and pieces of raw meat. People accosted each other, and embraced in tears; the Tyrian towns were taken, the Nomads were dispersed, and all the Barbarians annihilated. The Acropolis was hidden beneath coloured canopies; the beaks of the triremes, drawn up beyond the mole, glittered like a bank of diamonds; everywhere there was a feeling of order reëstablished, a new existence beginning. A vast happiness spread over all; it was the wedding day of Salammbô and the king of the Numidians.

On the terrace of the temple of Khamoûn, gigantic gold plate covered three long tables, where the priests, the Elders, and the Rich were to sit; and a fourth table, still higher, was arranged for Hamilcar, Narr' Havas, and Salammbô: for by the

restoration of the Zaïmph she had saved her country, therefore the people made her wedding a national rejoicing, and on the square below they awaited her appearance.

But another longing, much keener, excited their impatience. They had been promised that Mâtho's death would be a feature of the ceremony.

It had been at first proposed to flay him alive, to run molten lead into his bowels, or to starve him to death; others wished to attach him to a tree with a monkey fastened behind him, to beat his brains out with a stone—for he had offended Tanit, and it was but just that the cynocephales of Tanit should avenge her. Some advised placing him on the back of a dromedary, and after having inserted in various parts of his body flaxen wicks steeped in oil, that he should be paraded about; and they were amused at the idea of the large animal wandering through the streets with this man writhing under the fire, like a lighted candelabrum blown about by the wind.

But to what citizens should his torture be entrusted, and why should the others be disappointed? It was desirable to find a mode of death wherein the entire city could participate, that all hands, all weapons, all things Carthaginian, even to the paving stones of the streets, and the water of the gulf, should unite to rend him, crush him, annihilate him. Therefore the Elders decided that he should go from his prison to the square of Khamoûn without any escort, his arms fastened behind his back; while the people were forbidden to strike him to the heart, as it was desired to prolong his life; or to put out his eyes, for he must witness his torture until the end; or to hurl anything against his person, or strike him with more than three fingers at a single blow.

Although he was not to appear until the close of the day, the crowd frequently fancied they caught sight of him, and they would rush toward the Acropolis, deserting the streets: then they returned with a prolonged murmur. Many persons had been waiting in the same place since the previous day, and they hailed one another from afar, displaying their finger-nails, which they had allowed to grow that they might more surely

lacerate the victim's flesh. Others walked about restlessly. Some were pale, as if they awaited their own execution.

Suddenly, behind the Mappals, great feather fans rose above the heads. It was Salammbô leaving her palace: a sigh of relief went forth.

But the cortège spent a long time in coming, moving step by step.

First defiled the priests of the *Dii-Patæci*, then those of Eschmoûn, and of Melkarth, successively followed by all the other colleges, with the same insignia and in the same order as they had observed at the time of the procession to the sacrifice. The pontiffs of Moloch passed by with heads bowed, and the multitude, as in a kind of remorse, shrank back from them. But the priests of the Rabbetna advanced with a proud step, their lyres in their hands; the priestesses, wearing transparent robes of yellow or black, followed, uttering cries like birds, writhing like vipers, or to the sound of flutes they whirled about, imitating the dance of the stars, and their light, fluttering vestments wafted delicate puffs of perfume through the streets. The people wildly applauded. Hailed with applause, among these women, were the Kedeschim with their painted eyelids, symbolic of the hermaphrodism of the Divinity; perfumed and clothed like the women, they resembled them, in spite of their flat breasts and their narrower hips.

The female principle was dominant, overpowering all else. A mystic voluptuousness floated in the heavy air; already the torches were lighted in the depths of the sacred woods, for during the night a great orgy of prostitution would be held there—three vessels had brought courtesans from Sicily, and others had come from the desert.

As the various colleges arrived they took their places in the courts of the temple, on the outer galleries, or on the length of the double stairway that ascended the walls, meeting at the top. Rows of white robes appeared between the colonnades, and the entire structure was peopled with human statues, motionless as stone.

After the priests came the masters of finance, the governors

of provinces, and all the Rich. Below, surged a vast tumult. From the neighbouring streets the crowd poured forth; the sacred slaves beat them back with their staves; and then, in the midst of the Elders, crowned with gold tiaras, Salammbô appeared upon a litter surmounted by a purple canopy.

A tremendous shout arose; the cymbals and castanets sounded louder and louder, and the tambours thundered as the great purple canopy passed out of sight between the two gate-towers.

It reappeared on the first landing. Salammbô walked slowly beneath it; then she crossed the terrace to take her seat at the rear, on a throne carved out of a tortoise-shell. An ivory stool with three steps was placed beneath her feet; on the edge of the first step two Negro children knelt, and from time to time she rested her arms, which were weighted with heavy bracelets, upon their heads.

From her ankles to her hips she was enveloped in a network of tiny links, in imitation of the scales of a fish, and lustrous as polished mother-of-pearl. A blue zone clasped her waist, allowing her breasts to be seen through two crescent-shaped slashes, where carbuncle pendants hid the nipples. Her head-dress was made of peacocks' plumage, starred with jewels; a wide, ample mantle, white as snow, fell behind her—her elbows were close against her body; her knees pressed together; circlets of diamonds were clasped on her arms; she sat perfectly upright in a hieratic attitude.

Her father and the bridegroom occupied lower seats. Narr' Havas was robed in a golden-coloured simarre, and wore his crown of rock-salt, from beneath which escaped two locks of hair, twisted like the horns of Ammon; Hamilcar was attired in a tunic of violet, brocaded with golden vine leaves, and wore his battle-sword girt to his side. In the space enclosed by the tables, the python of the temple of Eschmoûn lay on the ground between puddles of rose-oil; holding its tail in its mouth, it described a large black circle, in the centre of which was a copper column supporting a crystal egg, and as the sun shone upon it, prismatic rays darted forth on all sides.

Behind Salammbô were ranged the priests of Tanit, in flaxen robes. At her right the Elders, bedecked with their tiaras, formed a great golden line. On the left, the Rich, with their emerald sceptres, made a long green line; and in the extreme background stood the priests of Moloch, their mantles giving them the appearance of a purple wall. The other colleges occupied the lower terraces. The multitude filled the streets or were mounted on the house-tops, and reached in long rows to the summit of the Acropolis.

Having thus the people at her feet, the firmament above her head, and around her the immensity of the sea, the gulf, the mountains, and the distant provinces, Salammbô, resplendent, seemed one with Tanit, and herself the prevailing genius of Carthage—its soul incarnate.

The festival was to last all night, and candelabra with many branches were planted like trees on the painted woollen tapestries that covered the low tables. Large flagons of electrum, amphoras of blue glass, tortoise-shell spoons, and small round loaves, were crowded between the double row of pearl-bordered plates; clusters of grapes with their leaves like thyrsi entwined vine-stocks; blocks of snow were melting on ebony salvers; lemons, pomegranates, gourds, and watermelons were piled in hillocks beneath the tall, massive silver ornaments; wild boars with open jaws wallowed in the dust of spices; hares cooked whole, still in their skins, seemed to leap among the flowers; shells were filled with mixed meats; pastries were in symbolic forms; and when the dish-covers were removed, doves flew forth.

Meanwhile slaves, with their tunics tucked up, moved about on tip-toe; from time to time the lyres sounded a hymn, or a chorus of voices arose. The hum of the people, continuous as the roar of the sea, floated vaguely over the feast, and seemed to lull it in a vast harmony. Some recalled the banquet of the Mercenaries; they abandoned themselves to dreams of happiness; the sun now began to sink, and the crescent moon was already rising in another part of the sky.

Then suddenly Salammbô turned her head, as if someone

had called her; the concourse, who watched her every movement, followed the direction of her eyes.

On the summit of the Acropolis the door of the dungeon, cut in the rock at the foot of the temple, had just opened; a man stood on the threshold of this black hole.

He came forth bent double, with the frightened air of a caged wild beast suddenly set free. The light dazzled him; and for a few minutes he remained motionless. All had recognised him, and they held their breath.

For the populace the body of this victim was something peculiarly their own, and was imbued with an almost religious splendor.

They leaned forward, straining to see him, particularly the women, who burned to look upon the one who had caused the death of their children and husbands; yet, despite themselves, in the depths of their souls there arose an infamous curiosity—a desire to know him completely, a longing blended with remorse, that turned into an excess of execration.

Finally he advanced; the bewilderment of surprise vanished. Numberless arms were raised, and for the moment he was lost to sight.

The stairway of the Acropolis had sixty steps; he descended them, as if he were rolled in a torrent from the top of a mountain. Thrice he was seen to bound, then at the bottom he fell upon his feet.

His shoulders bled, his chest heaved with deep pulsations, and he made such efforts to break the shackles, that his arms, which were crossed on his naked loins, swelled like the coils of a serpent.

The place into which he now walked opened into many streets. Along each street a triple barrier of bronze chains, attached to the naval of the *Dii-Patæci*, extended in parallel lines from end to end. The crowd was packed against the walls and houses; in the midst of the throng, the slaves of the Elders moved about, brandishing whip-thongs.

One of these pushed Mâtho before him with a powerful blow; he began to move forward.

The people stretched out their arms beyond the chains, shouting that he had been allowed too wide a path. He passed along, struck, pricked, mangled by all these revengeful fingers; when he reached the end of one street another appeared. Sometimes he threw himself to the side, striving to bite his tormentors; they would quickly draw back, and when the chains restrained him, they would burst out in peals of laughter.

A child tore his ear; a young girl concealing under her sleeve a spindle, with the point of it slit his cheek; they pulled out handfuls of his hair, tore strips from his flesh, and others held sticks on which were fastened sponges saturated in filth, with which they buffeted his face. A stream of blood gushed from the right side of his throat; and immediately the throng went wild. This last Barbarian represented to them all the Barbarians, all the army; on him they revenged themselves for all their disasters, fear and shame. The rage of the people increased with its gratification; the chains strained too tight as they leaned against them, threatening to part asunder. They were insensible to the blows the slaves dealt to force them back; some clung to the projections of the houses; all the openings in the walls were choked by heads, and the evil they were incapable of doing to his person they howled upon him.

Their maledictions teemed with atrocities of obscene abuse, with ironical encouragements and imprecations; and as they were dissatisfied with his present agonies they prophesied others more terrible for eternity.

This vast howling filled Carthage with a stupid monotony. Often a single syllable, one intonation, harsh, profound, frantic, would be repeated for several minutes by the entire people. The walls vibrated from their base to their summit, and both sides of the streets seemed to Mâtho to come against him, and rise from the ground like two immense arms, which suffocated him in the air.

He remembered once having had a similar experience. There had been the same crowd on the terraces, the same fierce looks, the same rage; but then he had walked at liberty—all had scattered before him, for the power of a god had shielded him.

This memory, gradually becoming distinct, brought with it an overwhelming sadness. Shadows passed before his eyes. The town whirled in a vertigo through his brain; blood streamed from a wound in his thigh; he felt himself to be dying; his legs doubled under him, and he sank gently upon the pavement.

Some of his persecutors took a red-hot bar from a tripod in the peristyle of the temple of Melkarth, slipped it under the first chain, and pressed it against his wound. The flesh was seen to smoke; the yells of the people drowned his voice; again he stood up and advanced.

Six paces further on, and a third, and yet a fourth time he fell: always some new torture goaded him up and on. Boiling oil was squirted through tubes upon him; fragments of broken glass were strewn under his feet; still he continued to walk. At the corner of the street of Sateb he leaned beneath the pent-house of a shop, with his back against the wall, and moved no further.

The slaves of the Council struck him with their lashes of hippopotamus-hide so furiously and long that the fringes of their tunics were soaked with sweat. Mâtho appeared insensible. Suddenly he started to run at random, emitting from his lips such a shuddering noise as is made by people who are suffering from intense cold. Thus he passed through the streets of Boudès, the street of Sœpo, crossed the vegetable market, and came into the square of Khamoûn.

From this point he belonged to the priests, and the Elders' slaves scattered the crowd; here he had more space. Mâtho gazed around him, and his eyes fell upon Salammbô.

At the first step that he had taken she had risen; then involuntarily, as he drew nearer, she had advanced gradually to the edge of the terrace. Soon, for her, all other external things were effaced: she saw only Mâtho. A silence possessed her soul, one of those abysses wherein the whole world disappears under the impress of a single thought, of one memory—of one look. This man who was walking toward her fascinated her.

Save for his eyes, he retained no human feature; he was no more than a tall, red mass; his broken bonds, hanging down his



THUS DIED HAMILCAR'S DAUGHTER

thighs, were so bloody that they could no longer be distinguished from the tendons of his wrists, denuded of flesh; his mouth remained open; from his eye-sockets darted two flames, which seemed to mount to his hair—and yet this wretched creature still moved on.

He arrived at the foot of the terrace. Salammbô was leaning over the balustrade; those frightful eyeballs were staring at her; and within her awoke the consciousness of all that he had suffered for her. Although he was now writhing in his death-agony, she saw him in his tent, on his knees as he encircled her waist with his arms, babbling sweet speeches; she yearned to feel those arms again, and hear those words. She was about to shriek out, when he fell backward to the earth, and moved no more.

Salammbô, almost swooning, was carried back to her throne by the priests who pressed around her. They congratulated her: it was her work. All clapped their hands and stamped their feet, and shouted her name in universal acclamation.

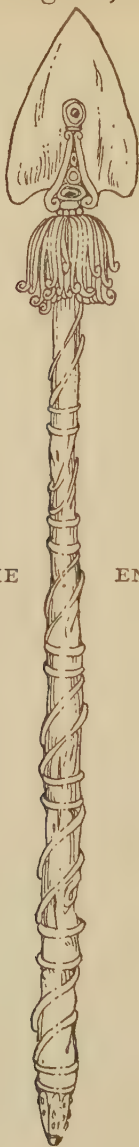
A man darted upon the corpse. Although he was beardless, he wore on his shoulders the mantle of the priests of Moloch, and in his belt the sort of knife used to cut up sacred meat, the haft terminating in a golden spatula. With a single stroke he split open Mâtho's chest, tore out his heart, and placed it on the spatula; and Schahabarim raised his arm, offering it to the Sun.

The sun was sinking behind the waves; its rays fell like long arrows athwart the crimson heart. It sank beneath the sea as the throbbing diminished and at the last pulsation disappeared. Then from the gulf to the Lagoon, and from the isthmus to the lighthouse, in all the streets, over all the housetops, and over all the temples, there went forth a single cry; sometimes it paused, only to be renewed; the buildings trembled. Carthage was convulsed in the spasm of a titanic joy, and a boundless hope.

Narr' Havas, intoxicated with pride, passed his left arm about Salammbô's waist, in sign of possession; in his right hand he took a gold patera, and drank to the genius of Carthage.

Salammbô arose, like her consort, grasping a cup in her hand, to drink also. She fell, her head across the back of the throne, pallid, stiff, her lips parted—and her loosened hair hung to the ground.

Thus died Hamilcar's daughter, for having touched the Veil of Tanit.



THE END





